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True Christianity:

A TREATISE

ON

SINCERE REPENTANCE, TRUE FAITH, THE HOLY WALK OF THE TRUE CHRISTIAN, ETC.

BY THE VENERABLE

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ORIGINALLY TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH BY REV. A. W. BOEHM,
GERMAN CHAPLAIN AT THE COURT OF ST. JAMES,
AND PUBLISHED IN LONDON, A.D. 1712.

A New American Edition,

REVISED, CORRECTED, AND FURNISHED WITH ADDITIONAL MATTER FROM THE ORIGINAL GERMAN,

TOGETHER WITH A

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PHILADELPHIA:

THE LUTHERAN BOOK STORE,

No. 807 Vine Street.

SMITH, ENGLISH & CO., No. 23 N. Sixth Street.

1868.

BV4834
.A78
1868

Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1868,

By JOSEPH A. SEISS,

In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

12-30368

CAXTON PRESS OF SHERMAN & CO.

CONTENTS.

PAGE

INTRODUCTION. By the Editor, ... xi

PREFACE. By the Author, ... xxxix

BOOK I.

WHEREIN TRUE CHRISTIANITY, SINCERE SORROW FOR SIN, REPENTANCE, FAITH, AND THE HOLY LIFE OF THE TRUE CHRISTIAN, ARE CONSIDERED.

CHAP. I. Showing what the image of God in man is, ... 1

CHAP. II. Of the fall of Adam, ... 4

CHAP. III. Showing how man is renewed in Christ unto eternal life, ... 7

CHAP. IV. Of true repentance, and the true yoke and cross of Christ, ... 11

CHAP. V. Wherein does true faith consist? 14

CHAP. VI. Showing how the vital power of the Word of God should be manifested in man through faith, ... 17

CHAP. VII. The law of God, written in the hearts of all men, convinces them that in the day of judgment they will be without excuse, ... 19

CHAP. VIII. No one can find comfort in Christ and his merits who does not truly repent, ... 22

CHAP. IX. The unchristian walk of many persons in our day, is a cause of the rejection of Christ and of the true faith, ... 26

CHAP. X. The children of the world are against Christ, and, consequently, their life and their Christianity are both alike false, ... 27

CHAP. XI. Showing that he does not truly repent, is not a Christian, and not a child of God, who does not, in his life and conduct, follow Christ; also, wherein the new birth and the yoke of Christ consist, ... 29

CHAP. XII. The true Christian dies unto himself and the world, and lives in Christ, . 34

CHAP. XIII. The Christian ought willingly to die unto himself and the world, for the sake of the love of Christ, and for the sake of that future and eternal glory, for which we were created and redeemed, ... 37

CHAP. XIV. The true Christian, who imitates Christ, hates his own life in this world, and forsakes the world, ... 41

CHAP. XV. Showing how the "old man" daily dies, and the "new man" is daily renewed, in a true Christian; also, wherein self-denial consists, and what is meant by the Christian's cross, ... 45

CHAP. XVI. A conflict is constantly maintained in the Christian between the Spirit and the flesh, ... 48

PAGE

CHAP. XVII. The inheritance and possessions of Christians are not of this world; they should, therefore, regard themselves as strangers in it, while they make use of earthly things, ... 50

CHAP. XVIII. Showing how greatly God is offended, when man prefers things that are temporal to those that are eternal; and how great the evil is, when our affections cleave to the creature and not to the Creator, ... 54

CHAP. XIX. He who is most of all conscious of his misery, is most of all acceptable to God; and his Christian knowledge of his misery, urges him to seek the grace of God, ... 57

CHAP. XX. A truly Christian sorrow for sin promotes the daily amendment of the life of man, makes him meet for the kingdom of God, and fits him, in an increasing degree, for eternal life, ... 61

CHAP. XXI. Of the true worship of God, ... 66

CHAP. XXII. A true Christian is known primarily by love, and by a daily amendment of life, ... 72

CHAP. XXIII. He who, in Christ, desires to grow in grace, is often compelled to withdraw from worldly society, ... 74

CHAP. XXIV. Of the love of God and our neighbor, ... 77

CHAP. XXV. The love of our neighbor more particularly considered, ... 83

CHAP. XXVI Wherefore our neighbor is to be loved, ... 85

CHAP. XXVII. Wherefore our enemies are to be loved, ... 89

CHAP. XXVIII. Showing how the love of the Creator should be preferred to that of all creatures; and how our neighbor is to be loved in God, ... 91

CHAP. XXIX. Of that reconciliation to our neighbor, without which God withdraws his grace, ... 94

CHAP. XXX. Of the fruits of love, ... 98

CHAP. XXXI. Pride and self-love corrupt and destroy even the best and noblest gifts, . 103

CHAP. XXXII. Great gifts do not demonstrate a man to be a Christian, but faith that works by love, ... 106

CHAP. XXXIII. God has no respect to the works of any one; but judges of works according to the heart, ... 108

CHAP. XXXIV. Showing that God alone, without any human aid, is the author of our salvation, and that we are to submit unreservedly to his grace; also, that Christ's merit is not imputed to the impenitent, ... 109

CHAP. XXXV. All wisdom, arts, and sciences, yea, even the knowledge of the whole Scripture, are vain, without a holy and Christian life, ... 113

CHAP. XXXVI. He who does not live in Christ, but gives his heart to the world, has only the outward letter of the Scriptures, but he does not experience their power, or eat of the hidden manna, ... 116

CHAP. XXXVII. He who does not follow Christ in faith, holiness, and continued repentance, cannot be delivered from the blindness of his heart, but must abide in eternal darkness; and he cannot have a true knowledge of Christ, or fellowship with him, ... 122

CHAP. XXXVIII. Showing that an unchristian life leads to false doctrine, hardness of heart, and blindness; also, treating of the eternal election of grace, ... 129

CHAP. XXXIX. Showing that the purity of the doctrine of the divine Word, is maintained not only by discussions and publications, but also by true repentance and holiness of life, ... 132

CHAP. XL. Sundry rules for leading a holy life, ... 137

PAGE

CHAP. XLI. The whole of Christianity consists in the restoration of the image of God in man, and the destruction of the image of Satan, ... 142

CHAP. XLII. In this concluding Chapter the reasons for adopting the method observed in Book I, are explained; the duty of guarding against spiritual pride is described, and the truth is set forth that true spiritual gifts cannot be obtained without prayer, ... 153

PREFACE TO THE SECOND BOOK, ... 157

BOOK II.

CHAP. I. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is given to us by our Heavenly Father as our help against the damnable and deadly poison of Original Sin, and the pernicious fruits thereof, as well as a protector against all the calamities and evils both of the body and the soul, ... 159

CHAP. II. The manner in which the Christian should apply and appropriate to himself the consolation, noticed in Chapter I, ... 163

CHAP. III. Our righteousness before God, consists solely in the perfect obedience and merit of Christ Jesus, and in the remission of sin apprehended by faith, . . . 168

CHAP. IV. Showing that saving faith in the true Christian, produces manifold fruits of righteousness, and that these must proceed from the depth of the heart; also, that the character of our outward works, depends, in the judgment of God, upon the state of the heart, ... 172

CHAP. V. Showing that the evidence of true Christianity does not consist in the knowledge and the hearing of God's word, but that he is a Christian, in whose life God's word is manifested, and who beseeches God in sincerity that this word, as a divine seed, may be quickened in him, and bear fruit, ... 177

CHAP. VI. The perfection and salvation of men depend on union with Christ by faith; but to this they can contribute nothing, whereas they rather interfere with the grace of God by their perverse will; but Christ, and He alone, accomplishes the work in us, ... 182

CHAP. VII. Showing that, in order to understand the true nature of repentance, we must necessarily know the distinction between the old and new man; or, how in us Adam must die, and Christ live; or, how in us the old man must die, and the new man live, ... 184

CHAP. VIII. Showing how graciously God invites us to repentance, and how necessary it is that it should not be delayed, ... 188

CHAP. IX. Showing what repentance is, and the manner in which the sinner truly repents; also, how the goodness of God leads us to repentance, ... 193

CHAP. X. The four properties of true repentance, ... 201

CHAP. XI. Showing that the fruit of conversion is the new creature; also, that the Christian is, by faith, a lord over all, and, by love, a servant of all; and, that the life of Christ is a mirror for us, ... 206

CHAP. XII. Showing that Christ is the only way and end of true godliness; and that man goes astray, when God does not guide and direct him, ... 207

CHAP. XIII. Showing that Jesus Christ is the true Book of life, and that his poverty teaches us to despise the glory of the world, ... 209

CHAP. XIV. Showing how Christ, by the shame and contempt which he endured, and by his self-denial, teaches us to despise the honor and glory of the world, . . . 212

CHAP. XV. Showing how we should, through Christ, bear and overcome the trials and contempt of the world, ... 214

PAGE

CHAP. XVI. Showing how Christians are to seek and obtain favor and glory through Christ, in Heaven, ... 218

CHAP. XVII. Showing how we may through Christ, and after the example of all the saints, overcome the calumnies of men, ... 220

CHAP. XVIII. Showing how the sorrows and pains of Christ should teach us to subdue the lusts of the flesh, ... 230

CHAP. XIX. Showing how we should behold in the crucified Christ, as in the Book of life, both our sins, and also the displeasure, the love, justice, and wisdom of God, . 232

CHAP. XX. Of the power and necessity of prayer, in these holy contemplations, . . 234

CHAP. XXI. Of the power of the noble virtue of humility, ... 238

CHAP. XXII. All the works of a true Christian must be done in humility, or they will, otherwise, become an abomination and idolatry, ... 241

CHAP. XXIII. A man who does not perceive his own emptiness, and does not give all the honor to God, commits the greatest of sins, and falls like Satan, ... 244

CHAP. XXIV. Of the noble virtue of love, and of its power, soundness, and purity, . 245

CHAP. XXV. Sundry signs by which we may ascertain whether we truly love Christ, . 249

CHAP. XXVI. Five kinds of works of love, in which the grace and goodness of God are especially revealed, ... 251

CHAP. XXVII. Showing how the Lord Jesus manifests himself to the loving soul as the highest love and the highest Good, ... 255

CHAP. XXVIII. Showing how the highest Good is perceived and tasted in the soul, . 256

CHAP. XXIX. Showing how the loving soul considers God in his benefits as the most liberal bountifulness, ... 258

CHAP. XXX. Showing how God manifests himself to the loving soul, as the supreme beauty, ... 262

CHAP. XXXI. Showing how God manifests himself to the loving soul as the infinite omnipotence, ... 26

CHAP. XXXII. Showing how the loving soul knows God as the highest righteousness and holiness, ... 264

CHAP. XXXIII. Showing how the loving soul considers God as the eternal wisdom, . 266

CHAP. XXXIV. Showing how a man should seek the wisdom of God by prayer; containing also a useful Treatise on Prayer, wherein the reader is taught how the heart is to be moved unto prayer, and brought into a quiet sabbath, so that prayer may be wrought in us by the Lord; the whole being set forth in Twelve Sections, . 269

SECT. I. All that we have lost in Adam, we recover fully and completely in Christ, . 269

SECT. II. The evils that follow the neglect of prayer, ... 270

SECT. III. The benefits of continual prayer, ... 271

SECT. IV. The true Christian chooses the narrow way in Christ, rather than the broad way in Adam, ... 273

SECT. V. Considerations which should move the heart to commune with God in prayer, ... 274

SECT. VI. The omniscient God knows what we stand in need of, before we ask him, 275

SECT. VII. That God invites and engages all men to the exercise of prayer, and promises to hear their petitions, ... 276

SECT. VIII. God is no respecter of persons, but has an impartial love for all his creatures, ... 277

SECT. IX. Showing that it is equally sinful to pray to God upon the presumption of our own merit, and to forbear on account of our unworthiness, ... 279

PAGE

Sect. X. The true worshipper ought not to seek after God in any particular place; for he finds him everywhere in spirit and in truth, ... 280

Sect. XI. The worshipper is not restricted to certain times of prayer, but may at any hour address God in prayer, provided that he does not hinder himself, . . 281

Sect. XII. The considerations stated above, not only dispose the heart to true prayer, but also furnish various useful lessons, ... 284

Chap. XXXV. Prayer is the sign of a true Christian, that is, of one who is anointed of the Lord, ... 285

Chap. XXXVI. On the benefits and power of prayer, and on its true ground or foundation, ... 287

Chap. XXXVII. Reasons why God certainly hears our prayers, ... 291

Chap. XXXVIII. Seven helps or aids for our infirmities in prayer, ... 298

Chap. XXXIX. The conversation of a believing soul with God, ... 301

Chap. XL. A conversation between faith and the mercy of God, ... 304

Chap. XLI. The great benefits, and the great efficacy of praise offered to God, . . 305

Chap. XLII. The reasons for which we ought daily to offer praises to God, . . . 309

Chap. XLIII. To praise God is the highest and most honorable employment of men, . 315

Chap. XLIV. Of patience, which triumphantly endures the cross, and waits for the promised glory, ... 318

Chap. XLV. Divine consolation produces patience under afflictions, ... 322

Chap. XLVI. Motives to patience; and, the benefits of the cross, ... 326

The benefits of the cross, ... 328

Chap. XLVII. Sentences, and examples of patience and consolation, ... 329

Chap. XLVIII. There is no affliction for which God has not provided appropriate consolation. The consolation which he affords is always greater than our misery; this consideration should sustain and confirm our patience, ... 332

Chap. XLIX. The truth of God and the certainty of his promises, ought to dispose us to patience, ... 336

Chap. L. Showing how hope is tested in seasons of adversity; it maketh not ashamed, 341

Chap. LI. Comfort for those that are weak in faith, ... 344

Chap. LII. Comforting instructions for those that are laboring under great temptations in spirit, ... 349

Chap. LIII. Consolations for those who labor under great spiritual temptations, . . 355

Chap. LIV. Comforts under secret and spiritual temptations of the devil, . . . 361

Chap. LV. The reasons for which God sometimes delays his comfort and assistance, . 365

Chap. LVI. Showing that in seasons of trial the consideration of the exalted patience of Christ, and of the future and eternal glory, will alleviate the burden of the cross, ... 367

Chap. LVII. Consolations against the fears of death, ... 368

Conclusion of the Second Book, ... 374

Preface to the Third Book, ... 375

BOOK III

Chap. I. Of the great internal treasure of an enlightened believer, ... 378

Chap. II. True faith, and converse with the soul, the only means of attaining to this inward treasure, ... 381

PAGE

CHAP. III. The whole treasure of the inner man depends on faith, namely, God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the kingdom of God, ... 384

CHAP. IV. The believing soul seeks God internally, in itself; its beauty and blessedness when it is united with God, ... 388

CHAP. V. Showing how a man may be drawn to God; also, wherein spiritual poverty consists; and, what the degrees of humility are, ... 389

CHAP. VI. The seat of God in the soul, ... 390

CHAP. VII. Of the dignity of the soul; of true repentance; and, of divine mercy, . 392

CHAP. VIII. The calling of God is earnest and sincere, and directs us to come to him, 393

CHAP. IX. The purifying influence of true faith, ... 395

CHAP. X. Showing how the natural light in us must disappear, and the light of grace shine forth, ... 397

CHAP. XI. God, the light of the soul, directing us not to judge our neighbors, . . 399

CHAP. XII. The Christian ought daily, once at least, wholly to abstract himself from all external objects, and retire into his own soul; the advantages of this course, . 401

CHAP. XIII. Showing how the love of God enters into the soul, when it is empty of the love of the creatures, ... 402

CHAP. XIV. Of the exercise of patience and love, ... 404

CHAP. XV. Showing how Christ, the eternal Word of the Father, perfects his work in the hearts of the faithful, by love and humility, ... 405

CHAP. XVI. Showing how the Holy Spirit operates in our souls, ... 408

CHAP. XVII. Signs of the presence of the Holy Spirit in us, ... 409

CHAP. XVIII. Showing how worldly pleasures drive away the Holy Spirit, . . . 410

CHAP. XIX. Of inward prayer, and of the true use of the Lord's Prayer, . . . 412

CHAP. XX. Showing that humility must first be laid as a foundation in the heart, and all our works must rest on it; its blessed influences, ... 414

CHAP. XXI. Showing that a man ought to rest in God alone, and not in his gifts; and that he must deny himself, ... 415

CHAP. XXII. Showing how our works may be rendered acceptable to God, . . . 416

CHAP. XXIII. Of the mystery of the Cross, by which we are drawn to God, . . 419

PREFACE TO THE FOURTH BOOK, ... 423

BOOK IV.

PART I.

TREATING OF THE WORKS OF THE SIX DAYS OF CREATION, IN GENERAL.

CHAP. I. Of light, the work of the First Day, ... 425

CHAP. II. Of heaven, the work of the Second Day, ... 429

CHAP. III. Of the separation of the waters from the land, the work of the Third Day, 431

PAGE

CHAP IV. Of the sun, moon, and stars, the work of the Fourth Day, ... 440
CHAP. V. Of the waters, and their productions, the work of the Fifth Day, . . . 446
CHAP. VI. Of the living creatures, the work of the Sixth Day, ... 450

PART II.

TREATING SPECIALLY OF MAN.

CHAP. I. God, an infinite and eternal Being, ... 458
CHAP. II. God, the Supreme Good, ... 459
CHAP. III. Man, the most noble of all creatures, and made for the service of God, . 460
CHAP. IV. God made man in his own image, in order that he might delight in him, . 460
CHAP. V. That God by his love bestows himself upon us, ... 461
CHAP. VI. Showing how much man is indebted to God for his everlasting love, . . 462
CHAP. VII. Of the things that instruct and comfort the soul, ... 462
CHAP. VIII. Of the obligations under which men lie to God, ... 463
CHAP. IX. Man even more indebted to God for inward, than for outward blessings, . 464
CHAP. X. Of the wisdom which God has shown in the formation of man, . . . 465
CHAP. XI. Of the obligations man lies under to God, ... 465
CHAP. XII. Of answering the obligations which man lies under to God, . . . 466
CHAP. XIII. Showing that God's love appears in all his works, even in his chastisements, ... 467
CHAP. XIV. Showing how, and on what account, man is obliged to love God, . . 468
CHAP. XV. Showing that all the creatures continually remind us of the love which we owe to God, ... 469
CHAP. XVI. A general rule teaching us how to answer our obligations to God, . . 469
CHAP. XVII. Showing that the Christian who loves not God is without excuse, . . 470
CHAP. XVIII. Showing that our duty to God tends to promote our own happiness, . 471
CHAP. XIX. The service which the creatures render to man, compared with that which man renders to God, ... 471
CHAP. XX. All things are preserved by the hand of God, ... 472
CHAP. XXI. Showing that from the service of man and the creatures, a union takes place between the visible world, man, and God, ... 473
CHAP. XXII. From the love which we owe to God, proceeds that which we owe to our neighbor, ... 474
CHAP. XXIII. Man is made in the image of God, ... 474
CHAP. XXIV. That man is obliged to love his neighbor as himself, ... 475
CHAP. XXV. All mankind are to be considered as one man, or as being many members of one great body, ... 476
CHAP. XXVI. Charity, the foundation of the greatest strength, ... 477
CHAP. XXVII. Of the nature, properties, and fruits of love, ... 477
CHAP. XXVIII. Love unites him who loves with the person loved, and transforms into the same nature, ... 478
CHAP. XXIX. Nothing is worthy of our love, but that which can make us more noble and pure, ... 479

PAGE

CHAP. XXX. Our chief love is due to God, as the first and last, the beginning and the end of all things, ... 479

CHAP. XXXI. He who principally loves himself, actually sets up himself in God's stead, ... 480

CHAP. XXXII. Love to God, the source of all that is good; self-love, the source of all evil, ... 481

CHAP. XXXIII. Of the love of God, and the love of self, ... 482

CHAP. XXXIV. Love to God, the only source of peace and unity, ... 483

CHAP. XXXV. Showing how we ought to love God, ... 483

CHAP. XXXVI. Divine joy, the fruit of divine love, ... 484

CHAP. XXXVII. Of the evil fruits of self-love, ... 485

CHAP. XXXVIII. Everlasting sorrow and death, the end of self-love and carnal joy, . 486

CHAP. XXXIX. All that we have must be offered and consecrated to God, . . . 487

CHAP. XL. He can never praise and glorify God, who seeks his own glory, . . . 488

CONCLUSION, ... 488

INDEX, ... 491

INTRODUCTION.

BY THE AMERICAN EDITOR.

BOTH the general purpose of the venerable John Arndt in writing his "TRUE CHRISTIANITY," and also his own character and spirit, will be best exhibited by submitting to the reader a statement referring to his personal history. He was born, December 27th, 1555, in Ballenstädt, a town in the Duchy of Anhalt, where his father, Rev. Jacob Arndt, long labored as the chaplain of Duke Wolfgang, and the pastor of one of the Evangelical Lutheran congregations of the place. The latter was a devout and faithful minister of the Gospel, and a wise and affectionate father. He had, from the earliest period, devoted much attention to the religious education of his son, in the performance of which holy duty he was faithfully sustained by his excellent wife. Their efforts were abundantly blessed. The son, even in his early years, took great pleasure in reading the writings of Luther, and also acquired a fondness for those of Thomas á Kempis, of Tauler, and of others who breathed the same spirit of devotion. That this feature of his religious character did not undergo any essential change in his riper years, appears from the circumstance that he was one of the first who collected, arranged, and republished the religious tracts of Stephen Prætorius, a Lutheran divine of an eminently devout spirit. These were subsequently re-edited by Martin Statius, who prefixed the title: *Spiritual Treasury* (Geistliche Schatzkammer), to the collection. This book of devotion was highly prized by Spener, has often been reprinted, is found in many German households, and well deserves to be translated, and thus made accessible to the English religious public.

§ 2. In his tenth year Arndt lost his father, but the orphan soon found friends who, in the good providence of God, enabled him to continue the studies which he had commenced with distinguished success under the guidance of his father. After completing his preparatory education in the schools of Halberstadt and Magdeburg, he proceeded, in the year 1576, to the university of Helmstedt, which had recently been established.

In the course of the following year, 1577, he went as a student to the university of Wittenberg, soon after the official recognition of the principles embodied in the Formula of Concord (published in 1580), by which that institution received a strictly Lutheran character, and every tendency to any other doctrinal system was successfully arrested. It was here that he formed a very close union, first as a student, and then as a personal friend, with the eminent Polycarp Leyser, the elder of that name, whose firmness and devotion in sustaining the distinctive features of Lutheranism have assigned to him a high position in the history of his Church.—After Arndt had, even at this early age, acquired distinction as an accomplished private lecturer on Natural Philosophy, etc., as well as on the Epistle to the Romans, Leyser furnished him with an unusually favorable recommendation to the professors in Strasburg. This city, the government and population of which were exclusively Lutheran, had not yet been subjected to that great calamity which afterwards befell it, when the despot and bigot, Louis XIV., incorporated it with the French monarchy, and by assigning undue privileges to papists, and adopting other tyrannical measures, opened an avenue for the introduction, not merely of an inferior Romanic language, but also of the errors and superstitions of the Church of Rome.

§ 3. Arndt continued his theological studies in Strasburg, under the direction of Prof. Pappus, who was also distinguished for his devotion to the genuine Lutheran faith. In the year 1579 he proceeded to Basel, where, under the gentle sway of Sulcer, the Lutheran faith had acquired influence and authority. In this city he was temporarily engaged as the tutor of a young Polish nobleman; the latter, on one of their excursions, when Arndt had accidentally fallen into the Rhine, succeeded in seizing his sinking preceptor by the hair of his head, and thus became the means, in the hands of God, of saving a life of incalculable value, designed to prove an ever-flowing source of blessings to the Church.

§ 4. During this whole period Arndt occupied himself with the study of medicine, in connection with his strictly theological studies; it is possible that he would have ultimately chosen the practice of medicine as the business of his life, if a severe illness had not intervened. After his recovery, he believed it to be his duty to renounce his personal tastes, and he thenceforth consecrated himself entirely to the service of the Church. His medical and chemical occupations, although not abandoned, were afterwards regarded by him only as a recreation.

§ 5. He returned, in 1581 or 1582, to his native place, and labored for some time as a teacher, until he was called by his prince, Joachim Ernest, to be the pastor of the congregation in Badeborn, a village in the Duchy of Anhalt; he was, accordingly, ordained in the month of October of the same year. It was here, too, that he was married, October 31, 1583, to Anna Wagner, the daughter of an eminent jurist, with whom he passed

the remaining thirty-eight years of his life in unclouded domestic happiness. She was a devout Christian woman, who cheered and encouraged Arndt amid his many cares, alleviated every burden to the extent of her ability, and was always regarded by him with tenderness and gratitude. They were childless; but many an orphan found that their hearts could overflow with love towards the young and destitute—a love as full of warmth as beloved children have ever experienced parental love to be.

§ 6. In this first pastoral charge of Arndt, the unhappy state of affairs subjected him, particularly during the latter part of the seven years which he spent in it, to a "Lutheran martyrdom," as Tholuck expresses himself (Herzog. Encyk. I., 536). The duke, John George, who now reigned (a relative of the palsgrave, or count palatine, Casimir, a zealous Calvinist), after various inward struggles, abandoned the Lutheran faith, and, in the year 1596, publicly adopted the Reformed faith, a few years after the transactions to which we now refer. Even Protestant rulers, who had not yet learned the theory that a union of church and state can operate only perniciously, perpetually interfered in the internal affairs of the church.—At this period it was the custom of Lutheran pastors, when they administered the rite of Baptism, to follow the liturgical form which prescribed "exorcism." This feature of the whole baptismal form, which was introduced as early as the third century, or even earlier (before the days of Tertullian and Origen), consisted simply in a sentence adjuring the evil spirit to depart from the subject of Baptism. The early practice had, like others, been gradually associated, after the rise and development of popery, with superstitious ideas, such as was also the case with the Lord's Supper, until it assumed an absurd and even revolting form. At the period of the Reformation, Zwingli and Calvin (Inst. IV., c. 15, 19; c. 19, 24) rejected the whole form of exorcism. Luther and Melanchthon, on the other hand, after discarding the popish excrescences, believed that the scriptural doctrine which the early form involved or suggested, authorized the retention of the practice, when restricted to a very plain and simple formula, expressive of a scriptural truth.—Now, at that period, as it is well known, unfriendly feelings, engendered by various causes, existed to a certain extent, between the heads respectively of the Reformed and the Lutheran churches, in consequence of which even harmless customs which none would, under ordinary circumstances, either advocate or condemn with partisan feeling, assumed a confessional character. Such was the case with the purified and simple Lutheran baptismal sentence containing the "exorcism."

§ 7. Arndt's course in this matter has often been misunderstood; as it, however, demonstrates him to have been alike a very firm and conscientious man, and also an uncompromising supporter of the distinctive doctrines and usages of the Lutheran Church, the following details may be appropriately furnished.—The language which Luther retained in his form

for Baptism (*Taufbüchlein*), after omitting all popish and superstitious practices, was the following. Between the prayer and the reading of Mark 10 : 13–16, the pastor says: "I adjure thee, thou unclean spirit, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, that thou go out and depart from this servant of Jesus Christ, Amen."—Luther understood the form to be a declaration or distinct confession of the doctrine of Original Sin, and a renunciation of Satan. Still, the Lutheran Church, as such, never recognized the *necessity* of this ancient form, and its confessional writings never allude to it. After the excitement of feeling peculiar to Arndt's age, had been allayed by time, the Lutheran Church regarded the whole as a mere *adiaphoron*, that is, a "thing indifferent," not essentially involving any principle whatever, inasmuch as the doctrine of Original Sin had already been very explicitly set forth and confessed in her Symbolical Books. Such was the opinion of the eminent Lutheran dogmatical writers, Gerhard, Quenstedt, Hollaz, etc.; and men like Baier and Baumgarten even advocated the discontinuance of the practice. It is no longer retained in any prominent manner in the Lutheran Church.—But in the age in which Arndt lived, who was not a man that would obstinately cling to a mere form, the *rejection* of the formula of Exorcism *did* involve a principle; for, under the peculiar circumstances, that rejection might be understood to be, first, a rejection of the doctrine of Original Sin, and, secondly, an affirmation that the children of believing parents were in the kingdom of heaven, even before they had received Baptism. But all this seemed to conflict with the Pauline doctrine that all are "by nature the children of wrath." Eph. 2 : 3. While, then, J. Ben. Carpzov, the distinguished interpreter of the Symbolical Books, who died in 1557, decides that the "Exorcism" is in itself a matter of indifference, and may without scruple be dropped, he nevertheless holds that if the omission of it should be understood as a denial of the Scripture doctrine of the corruption of human nature (Original Sin), it becomes, in such a case, a matter of principle to retain the formula. (*Isagoge*, etc., p. 1122 *ff.*; 1608.) Walch, the other eminent interpreter of the Symbolical Books (*Introductio*, etc.), does not refer to the matter at all, as it is no essential part of the Lutheran Creed. But Arndt, who was a calm, sagacious, and conscientious observer, and who may justly be considered as claiming that, in forming a judgment respecting him, we should not overlook the spirit of his times, apprehended that the suppression of the "exorcism" was secretly designed to be the forerunner of the suppression of the entire Lutheran faith, which constituted the life of his soul; he could not, under such circumstances, consent to endanger his most precious treasure.

§ 8. Now the duke, John George, after his virtual adoption of the Reformed faith and practice, issued a peremptory order that the formula of Exorcism should no longer be employed in his dominions at the baptism

of any infant. Arndt, who was characterized by a childlike submission to those in authority, as long as matters of principle were not involved, could not renounce his faith in God's word, and, especially, his personal conviction of the natural depravity of the human heart. He might have consented to drop a mere form; but he saw here an entering wedge, which justly alarmed him. His apprehensions were subsequently proved to have been only too well founded, when, soon afterwards, Luther's Catechism was suppressed, and another substituted in its place. Hence, as he could not renounce a prominent feature of the Lutheran creed, he firmly and positively refused to obey the ducal command. He remarked, in the written statement which embodied his reasons for refusing to obey, and which was submitted to the civil authorities, that his conscience would not allow him to comply with such a demand of the secular authority—that the orthodox fathers, who had, during thirteen centuries, connected "exorcism" with Baptism, understood it in accordance with the mind and true sense of the Scriptures (*ex mente et vero sensu Scripturæ*)—that it was, therefore, by no means "an impious ceremony" (as the civil ruler, a layman, had thought proper to designate it),—that he must necessarily abide by the decision of his conscience—and, that he would humbly submit to any sentence which his prince might pronounce in the case. The date which he affixed to the document, is Sept. 10, 1590. That sentence, which was soon afterwards proclaimed, deposed Arndt from his office, and banished him from the ducal territories. The reader of Book I. of the "True Christianity," will now understand, after observing the earnestness with which the author insists on the doctrine of Original Sin, or the depravity of human nature, that he could not conscientiously take any step which would, even indirectly, involve a denial of that sad truth of the Bible,—a truth to which his knowledge of his own heart daily testified.

§ 9. But the Divine Head of the Church did not depose this faithful minister. At the very time when Arndt seemed to be homeless and friendless, two important posts were offered to him—one in Mansfeld, the other in Quedlinburg, an important city, which, after belonging to various rulers, has at last been incorporated with the monarchy of Prussia. The city adopted the Lutheran faith in 1539. Arndt decided to make this place his home, and he labored here with eminent success, during a period of seven years, as the pastor of the church of St. Nicholas. However, he also endured much affliction in this new charge, and his holy zeal and devout spirit, while fully appreciated by intelligent and enlightened believers, were misunderstood and even hated by others, so that he longed to be transferred to another field of labor.

§ 10. He was at length permitted to depart, and removed to the city of Brunswick, situated in the territory of the duke of Brunswick; it aspired at that time to become a "free city," subject directly to the German emperor. The warfare between the duke and the city, during Arndt's

residence in the latter, subjected him to many sore trials. His abode in it, extending from 1590 to 1608, is specially interesting, as he then presented to the religious community Book I. of his "True Christianity." Dr. A. Wildenhahn, who has, in recent times, furnished us with various charming volumes, descriptive of the times, respectively, of Luther, Spener, Paul Gerhardt, etc., in which he combines "fiction and truth," has selected this period of Arndt's history, as the one to which he dedicates his two delightful volumes, entitled "Johannes Arndt" (Leipzig, 1861). This author complains that he found it a difficult task to collect full and authentic accounts of Arndt's life. Still, he obtained access to various documents in the archives of the city of Brunswick, and in the royal library in Dresden, which had not been previously examined even by Arndt's best biographer, the Rev. Frederick Arndt, of Berlin; and these materially assisted him in preparing his own work.*

§ 11. During the earlier years of Arndt's residence in Brunswick, as a co-pastor of the church of St. Martin, his life was comparatively peaceful and happy. The purity of his character, the soundness and power of his doctrine, and the diligence and fidelity manifested in his pastoral labors, could not fail to command the respect, and attract the love of all candid persons. But he was at length subjected to trials of a new and painful character, and became the victim of the hostile and persecuting spirit of men from whom a very different course of conduct might have reasonably been expected. The origin of these new difficulties has not always been clearly understood; while some have regarded Arndt as worthy of the censures of those who assailed him, others are disposed to condemn those assailants in unqualified terms. It is strange that, even at this comparatively remote period, such judgments are sometimes expressed in language which betrays personal feeling rather than it announces the calm judgment of a later and disinterested generation.

§ 12. It is here necessary to cast a glance at the history of the times which preceded and followed the eventful year 1555, in which Arndt was born, a year ever memorable as the one in which the signing of the articles of the Peace of Augsburg secured a temporary external repose for the Lutheran Church. This "Peace" terminated at least the horrors which had followed the introduction, in 1548, of the *Augsburg Interim*, by which the newly-established Protestant doctrine was seriously endangered. The provisions of this *Interim* were enforced with such merciless tyranny by popish authorities, that in South Germany alone about four hundred

* A very accurate and interesting "Life of John Arndt," was published in English by Rev. Dr. J. G. Morris, of Baltimore, in 1853, which presents the principal events that belong to Arndt's history, and furnishes a faithful portraiture of his personal character. Wildenhahn's work, admirably translated by Rev. G. A. Wenzel, now of Pittsburg, Pa., was published as a serial in the "Lutheran and Missionary," about three years ago. This work, in a permanent form, would be a rich addition to our English religious literature.

faithful Lutheran pastors, who could not conscientiously accede to an arrangement which might possibly restore the full authority of the errors and superstitions of Rome, were driven, as exiles, with their families, from their homes. The spirit of the Christian martyrs of the early ages of the Church revived in these heroic men, and they clung with undying tenacity to their holy faith.

§ 13. That faith now encountered new enemies, who did not resort to fire and the sword, but who adopted more insidious means for corrupting divine truth; and again, assaults like theirs, only increased the jealousy with which the genuine Lutherans guarded the purity of their doctrinal system. It was the only gift of heaven, which sin and Satan could not touch, and which retained all its unsullied holiness. The soul of man had become corrupt; the body was subject to disease and death; the world, fair as it was, and rich in the gifts of God, had nevertheless been made by sin to bring forth thorns and thistles. But the Gospel truth, which conducted men to Christ and heaven, remained in all its purity and power. These men were willing to suffer and die, but while they did live, they could not relax the grasp with which they held fast to evangelical truth. Now, amid the political and religious commotions of that stormy age, could we expect that devout men should say, "Peace, peace;" when there was no peace? (Jerem. 6 : 14.)

§ 14. Let us illustrate this subject. Schwenkfeldt, for instance (born in 1490; died, 1561), an opponent of both the Lutherans and the Reformed, as well as of the Papists, and, accordingly, constantly engaged in controversies with all parties, declared that Luther's uncompromising determination to maintain the authority of the written word of revelation, the Bible, was equivalent to a worship of the letter. He assigned, in his fanaticism and morbid mysticism, a rank to an inner and direct word of the Divine Spirit, which he asserted that he received, far above that of the written word of God. He refused to make any distinction between the divine act of the justification of the believer, on the one hand, and the progressive sanctification of the believer, on the other. He taught that the two natures of Christ, the divine and the human, were so fused together, or, rather, that the flesh of Christ was so absolutely deified or converted into God himself, that no distinction between them remained,—that the regenerate could live without sin, etc. He succeeded, in spite of the crudeness, one-sidedness, and unsoundness of his doctrines, in attracting many disciples. His death, which occurred in 1561, a few years after Arndt's birth, did not terminate the widespread confusion which he had created in the Protestant Church; the dread of that sickly form of mysticism which he attempted to establish, long remained. The fear was naturally entertained that it might lead many astray, who, while they did not otherwise fraternize with Schwenkfeldt in his wild and absurd course,

might be deluded by his claims to superior religious intelligence and holiness.

§ 15. The disastrous influences of the demagogue Thomas Münzer (born in 1490), and of his fanatical party, the Zwickau prophets, on sound doctrine and sound morals, as well as the blood which they had shed, were still vividly remembered.—Servetus, the Unitarian, had perished, but he left a seed behind; the doctrine of Christ's deity still remained a point of attack. And besides these false teachers, several others, who were originally connected in various modes with the Lutheran Church, promulgated at various times opinions which seemed to be subversive of all Scripture doctrine.—Agricola, who had originally been an active adherent of Luther, gradually departed from the faith. He unquestionably betrayed the interests of Protestantism by sanctioning the Augsburg Interim of 1548. He engaged in a controversy, at first with Melanchthon, and then with Luther himself, on the subject of the proper "Use of the law"—the Antinomistic controversy—maintaining that the law was no longer of importance to the believer, and that the Gospel alone should be preached. He died in 1566, when Arndt was about eleven years old. The confusion in the church, which he created by his dangerous sentiments on several points, was long painfully felt.—The Osiandrian controversy, respecting Justification, and its relation to Sanctification, began in 1549, and closed only when Arndt was already a student.—The Majoristic controversy originated in the public declaration made by G. Major, that "good works are *necessary to salvation.*" The fears which such a doctrine, that savored of popery, produced among orthodox and devout Lutherans, were excessive. Those who opposed Major, were alarmed by his unguarded expressions, and apprehended that the Gospel doctrine of *Justification by faith in Christ alone, without human works or merit*, would be endangered, unless they silenced him. The controversy, in its most energetic form, terminated about seven years after Arndt's birth, but the indirect effects of the misconceptions connected with the great topic of this controversy, were deeply felt by him.—The Synergistic controversy, relating to the question whether man could co-operate with the Holy Spirit in the work of his conversion, began in the year in which Arndt was born, and was maintained with great energy during several years.—The so-called Cryptocalvinistic controversy, referring mainly to the doctrine of the Lord's Supper, and involving certain important questions respecting the Person of Christ, commenced about three years before Arndt's birth, and agitated the church during many years.—These, and other subjects on which also controversies had arisen, were, in the good providence of God, at length calmly considered by learned and devout Lutheran theologians, conscientiously examined in the light of the divine Word, impartially decided, and set forth, in the year 1580, in the Formula of Concord, the last of the special Lutheran creeds, all the doctrines of which Arndt cordially

received, as he repeatedly declared in an official manner on various occasions, in his writings, in his last will and testament, and on his death-bed. (See below §§ 24, 25.) The very great reverence with which he regarded this noble creed, and his attachment to it, are to be ascribed not only to the spotless purity of the doctrines which it sets forth, but also to the good work which it performed in successfully and permanently deciding several very important questions which had latterly arisen, and on which the preceding creeds had not authoritatively and fully pronounced. It is, however, obvious, that even after these storms subsided, the waves would long remain in commotion, and it was precisely in these troublous times that Arndt labored in the ministry.

§ 16. The catalogue of the difficulties which awaited him, is not yet exhausted. We have to add, as a part of the history of the times, when an extraordinary number of political and ecclesiastical contentions prevailed, the excitement of feeling which certain differences of doctrine between the Lutherans and the Reformed engendered, and which would never have risen to the fearful height in which history now exhibits it to us, if political power, controlled alternately by the two religious parties in some of the German principalities, had not been invoked by them. The awful death by fire, which terminated the career of Servetus (Oct. 27, 1553, two years before the birth of Arndt, and more than six years after the death of Luther), was decreed by the civil authorities of Geneva, but was sanctioned by Calvin and even the gentle Melanchthon—a sad example of the clouded views of men at that time respecting religious liberty and the right of civil rulers to punish men for their errors in the faith.

§ 17. In the Palatinate (the ancient *Pfalz*, the territories of which are now distributed among Bavaria, Prussia, etc.) the Lutheran Church had been established, and popery ceased to exist. But in 1560, a few years after Arndt's birth, the Elector, Frederick III., withdrew from the church, and adopted the Reformed faith and usages. His successor, Lewis VI., endeavored to restore the ascendency of Lutheranism; but after his brief reign, the authorities which succeeded, established "Calvinism" (the term employed in Church History) on a permanent basis. A similar ecclesiastico-civil revolution occurred in Bremen in 1562; fourteen Lutheran pastors and the Lutheran members of the City Council were expelled, and the city became Reformed. Such changes occurred elsewhere. Both parties were undoubtedly more or less honest in adhering to their doctrinal views; and both claimed the right to depose and exile those of an opposite faith, whenever the civil and political power was, in either case, directed by them.

§ 18. Let it now be remembered that these contending Protestants, Lutheran and Reformed or Calvinistic, were led by men respectively, who were confessedly intelligent, learned, and endowed with great abilities, many of whom were not only honest in expressing their convictions, but also conscientious in their conduct, whether they were governed by an

erring or an enlightened conscience. That the latter is historically true, is demonstrated by their readiness, when they lost power, to submit to imprisonment or exile, rather than to renounce their respective creeds. They were all too well acquainted with Bible truth to look with other feelings than with horror on the popish creed. But while their own Protestant creed was very precious to their souls, they could not tolerate any departure from it, even if that departure was *not* in the direction "towards Rome." That departure must, as they judged, necessarily be equivalent to a denial of God's truth, as they believed that they had found it in the Bible. Thus all were alike sensitive—all seemed to feel that if they tolerated any error, *that* error could not be trivial—it was, as far as it extended, a denial of God's truth. Could they safely assume the shame and guilt of such a sin? We may add, that we are here speaking only of the *honest* leaders of the Lutherans and the Reformed, of whom each man judged and acted for himself, as one who was accountable to God. No honest Reformed theologian would have screened a Reformed heretic from condemnation; and no honest Lutheran would, for a moment, have tolerated a nominal Lutheran, who rejected any part of the creed of the church.

§ 19. At the same time, all these men were fallible creatures, subject to all the errors of judgment, and to all the passions and infirmities incident to fallen man. They often supposed that their intentions were pure, when selfish motives governed them, and their jealous guardianship of God's truth was combined with a jealous love for their personal opinions. It was under these circumstances, when each party watched with extreme jealousy over the purity of the faith, as adopted by it, and when, besides, many private interests—personal, political, and pecuniary—exercised vast influence, that Arndt entered on his labors.—We have introduced the above details, in order to explain his declarations in the preface to Book I. § 8, that he rejects the Synergistic, Majoristic, etc., errors, and entertains no other views except those which are set forth in the Lutheran Symbolical Books.

§ 20. When he commenced his labors in Brunswick, he was the youngest member of the "ministerium" of the city, that is, of the college composed of the pastors of the several city churches, all of which at that time strictly adhered to the Lutheran creed. He had long lamented that, in consequence of the infelicity of the times, which caused endless doctrinal controversies, the parties of which were many, Papists, Mystics, Unitarians, Reformed, Lutherans, etc., the attention of many persons was diverted from the practical duties of a Christian life, and directed exclusively to controversies on points of doctrine; the result was, that the understanding was actively exercised, but the heart was not properly affected. Such considerations induced him to write Book I. of his "True Christianity." It was his object to show that God demands a holy life, proceeding from faith in Christ, and that no jealousy concerning the

purity of the creed will atone for the absence of the fruits of the Spirit, as exhibited in the life and conduct of the individual. Hence he insists with a warmth unusual in that excited and controversial age, on repentance, on faith in Christ, and on a holy life. Possibly, the apparently sweeping assertions which occasionally occur in his writings, to the effect that the majority of his contemporaries lacked a heavenly spirit, acquired their sombre hue in consequence of the publicity given to human frailties, and the retirement and shade in which vast numbers of holy men preferred to dwell. His Book I., which constitutes the principal part of the work, was first published in Jena, in the year 1605; a second and improved edition appeared in 1607.

§ 21. It consisted principally of the matter which he had introduced in a course of practical sermons previously delivered by him on week-days. It attracted great attention, and was rapidly circulated throughout Germany. The modest and retiring author, without expecting such a result, at once became a celebrity. Nevertheless, new trials now commenced. An envious feeling seems to have been engendered in the hearts of several of his colleagues in the "ministerium" of the city, when they noticed the honor which the author had undesignedly gained. Perhaps, too, the controversial spirit of the times, and the jealousy of good men respecting the faith, which was assailed on all sides—by Papists, Calvinists, Unitarians, fanatics, etc.,—may have led them to scrutinize the book with too suspicious eyes. All held firmly to the Gospel doctrine of Justification by faith alone, without works. Now, when they found that Arndt insisted with such earnestness on the evidences of faith, as furnished by a holy life, they were morbidly affected, and apprehended that the doctrine of justification by faith *alone*, which their bitter enemies, the Papists, denounced, had not been guarded with sufficient care by Arndt. Other expressions, again, which they did not interpret impartially, led them to fear that he was introducing mysticism and other morbid religious systems into the Church. The reproaches which he was compelled to hear, deterred him for some time from fulfilling his promise of adding three other "Books" to Book I. The complete work may be regarded as consisting of *Four* Books, as published in 1609. At a considerably later period a fifth, and then a sixth book, were added. The former was designed as an explanation and recapitulation of the Four Books, and the latter, consisting in part of letters addressed to various eminent theologians, besides having the same object in view, was intended also to defend the doctrinal and ethical positions assumed in the Four Books. As they partake of the nature of an appendix, and refer, to some extent, to misunderstandings belonging to an earlier age, the Latin versions omit them, and this example was followed by the English translator.

§ 22. Arndt was freed from the unpleasant relations in which he stood to his colleagues in Brunswick, in which city he had spent about ten years,

by a call which he received in 1608 to enter a new field of labor in Eisleben. This city, which, as in the days of Luther (who was born and baptized, and who also died there), still belonged to the territory of the Counts of Mansfeld, is at present incorporated with the kingdom of Prussia (Province of Saxony). It was here that Arndt ventured to publish the whole of the Four Books of his "True Christianity." In this new position, his admirable character and spirit were justly appreciated alike by his patrons, the Counts of Mansfeld, by his colleagues, and by the people. The fidelity with which he remained at his post during the prevalence of an epidemic that carried off many of the inhabitants, his self-sacrificing spirit in the discharge of his pastoral duties, and his judicious course as an assessor of the local consistory, demonstrated the true nobility of his soul—the spirit of the divine Redeemer. However, even though his relations with all who surrounded him were of the most friendly character, he did not remain longer than about two years and a half in Eisleben. He had been repeatedly invited to assume important charges, which he declined to accept; for while he had often found opponents, his great personal merit, his eminent services, both as a preacher of the Gospel and as an author of devotional works, and his godly spirit, had secured for him the respect, confidence, and love of the whole religious public. Duke George of Brunswick-Lüneburg, who at that time resided in Celle (Zelle), invited him, in the year 1611, to accept the two offices of court-preacher and of General Superintendent of ecclesiastical affairs in the principalities of Brunswick and Lüneburg. (Celle was subsequently attached to the kingdom of Hanover, but has, in the most recent times, been absorbed, with the contiguous territories, by Prussia.) The Count of Mansfeld very reluctantly consented to Arndt's removal; the latter, however, believed that it had become his duty to enter the wide and inviting field of labor which Providence had opened to him. The reigning duke, who was deeply interested in the welfare of the Lutheran Church, judiciously and vigorously sustained his new court-preacher in all his labors. The latter, in addition to his ordinary pastoral duties, visited the congregations of the whole territory, introduced various ecclesiastical reforms, and continued till his death, which occurred May 11, 1621, to enjoy the divine blessing himself, and to be a blessing to all whom his influence reached. If he was born during a stormy period, and lived in an age of controversies which wounded his soul, he was, nevertheless, like Luther, very happy in being permitted to terminate his labors precisely at the time when he was called away. For, as Luther closed his eyes in peace during the year which preceded the disastrous battle of Mühlberg (April 24, 1547), so Arndt fell asleep soon after the Thirty Years' War began, before the world saw those horrors which language fails to describe in their awful extent. He had contracted a disease of the throat, which was subsequently aggravated by a violent fever; and his exhausted frame at length yielded to the

assault of disease. He sent for his friend and brother, the Rev. William Storch, early in the morning of May 9. After being placed on a chair, he humbly made a general confession of his sins, declared once more that he adhered as heretofore to the pure doctrine of God's word and rejected every error, and then, with all the cheerfulness of Christian faith, received the Lord's Supper. Dr. Morris, in the work referred to, in a note above, quotes from his authorities the following: "Mr. Storch then addressed him (in language similar to that which Dr. Jonas used in speaking to the dying Luther) as follows: 'I do not doubt, that as you have never entertained any doctrine contrary to God's word, but have always continued firm and steadfast in the pure, unadulterated word, the Scriptures of the prophets and apostles, the Augsburg Confession, and other Symbolical Books of the Lutheran Church, and most heartily and sincerely despised and rejected all contrary doctrines, so you will also by God's grace maintain to the end the same doctrines and faith which you have publicly preached and professed.' Arndt replied several times, in a weak but intelligible voice, most decisively, 'Yes, yes, that I will, even to the end.'" On the 11th of May he began to sink rapidly, but was still able to repeat many of his favorite texts, such as Ps. 143:2, and John 5:24. After having slept a short time, he awoke, looked upward, and exclaimed with a comparatively loud voice: "We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." John 1:14. His wife asked him when he had seen that "glory." He replied: "I saw it just now. O what a glory it is! It is the glory which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man to conceive of. This is the glory which I saw."—When he heard the clock striking at eight in the evening, he asked what the hour was. When it struck again, he repeated the question. On being told that it was striking nine, he said: "Now I have overcome all." These were the last words of this "good soldier of Jesus Christ." 2 Tim. 2:3. He lay perfectly still until after midnight, when he breathed his last. God had given him a peaceful death. The serenity of his soul in his last hours seemed to linger on his features, even after the spirit had departed.

§ 23. Two dukes of Brunswick-Lüneburg followed him to the grave (May 15th), as a testimony of their sense of the great worth of their revered spiritual guide. The text of the funeral sermon, delivered by Rev. Mr. Storch, consisted of the words, "I have fought a good fight," etc. 2 Tim. 4:7, 8. His remains were deposited in the church at Celle. The tomb exhibits the following inscription:

Qui Jesum vidit, qui mundum et daemona vicit,
Arndius in scriptis vivit ovatque suis.

(That is: *Arndt, who saw Jesus, and conquered the world and the devil, lives and triumphs in his writings.*)

§ 24. Nothing could be more unjust than any charge affecting the purity of the faith of Arndt as a Lutheran Christian. His general orthodoxy was always readily admitted; a few unreasonable and prejudiced men, however, who suspected that mysticism and other errors were concealed in the "True Christianity," although the existence of such matter could not be established, nevertheless alleged, with a certain morbid feeling, that Arndt did not adopt the entire creed of the Lutheran Church, as set forth in "all her symbolical books." This circumstance accounts for the frequency and earnestness with which he declares his *unconditional* acceptance of, and hearty belief in, *all* the details of the Lutheran faith. Thus the reader will find, at the close of the Preface to Book I., an emphatic declaration of his recognition of the doctrines of *all the Symbolical Books*, the names of which he enumerates in full. See, also, the conclusion of Book II., and the conclusion of the Preface to Book IV., where similar declarations occur. He repeats them in his Preface to Book VI., where he employs the following language: "My dear reader, inasmuch as our holy Christian faith, the pure evangelical doctrine, has, for about one hundred years, been elucidated, purified, and sufficiently explained, in accordance with the rule of the holy Word of God, and also been cleansed from many errors through the means of two glorious and praiseworthy confessions of faith, namely, the Augsburg Confession, and the Formula of Concord, which have hitherto been, and still continue to be, my own confession of faith; and, inasmuch as some have, at the same time, uttered complaints respecting the ungodly manner of life of the present world, with which the Christian faith cannot coexist; therefore, I wrote, some years ago, Four Books on True Christianity, in which I have depicted the internal, and, also, the external Christian life. For although the pure *doctrine is the foremost point of true Christianity*, I have, nevertheless, not wished to treat of it in a special manner, as this has been copiously and superabundantly done by others, and is still daily done; and I have taken only the Christian *life* as my subject." This Book VI. appeared somewhat less than a year before his death, and gives special prominence to the last of the Lutheran confessions of faith—the Formula of Concord—in which the doctrines concerning the Person of Christ, the Lord's Supper, etc., are set forth in all their details; he thus repeats anew his cordial acceptance of the doctrines contained therein. In a letter of thanks addressed to Dr. Mentzer, of Giessen (Book VI., Part II., Letter 7), he expressly rejects the serious doctrinal errors of Schwenkfeldt respecting the Scriptures, the Person of Christ, the two Sacraments, etc., and adds: "These errors have been publicly condemned and rejected, partly in the Augsburg Confession, and partly in the Formula of Concord, after the pure doctrine was firmly established." He concurs, of course, in the condemnation of such errors.—In Letter 8, of the same Book, addressed to Dr. Piscator, of Jena, he says: "I call on the great God, the Searcher of hearts, as my witness, that it was

not in my mind, in anything which I have written, to depart from the true religion of the Augsburg Confession and the Formula of Concord, and that I had no intention to disseminate erroneous opinions, much less to defend any which conflicted with the Symbolical Books of our Church."

§ 25. On his death-bed he repeated anew, as we have seen, that he continued, as heretofore, to adhere faithfully to the pure evangelical doctrine. In the two copies of his last will and testament, of the years 1610 and 1616, he solemnly declares that he had always held with full consciousness and understanding the doctrines of the Augsburg Confession and the Formula of Concord, and never departed from their contents either in his public teaching or his private views, that he never would adopt any other faith, and that he prayed that the grace of God might sustain him in this frame of mind until his last hour should come. The singularly emphatic manner in which, on every appropriate occasion—and many of such occurred—he declared his sincere belief in the peculiar and distinctive doctrines of the Lutheran Church, in all their details, as set forth in her Symbolical Books, by no means proceeded from a narrow-minded sectarian feeling. "Christ is all, and in all" (Col. 3 : 11)—these apostolic words indicate the spirit of Arndt's religion. He could not sympathize with the Papist, who robs Christ of the glory which belongs exclusively to his atoning work—not with the Unitarian, who attempts to dethrone Him—not with the fanatic, who, even when honest, is misguided by passion and spiritual pride—not with the unbeliever, who flees from the shame of the cross—not even with his Reformed fellow-Christians, whose merits he readily acknowledged, but whose rejection of the Lutheran doctrine respecting the Person of Christ and the Lord's Supper, as set forth especially in the Formula of Concord, grieved his soul. He had found the precious Gospel truth, which constituted his life, to be identical with the creed of his Church, and with *that* creed alone, in all its glorious fulness. He could not consent to sacrifice one jot or one tittle of the Augsburg Confession, nor could he assign to it an isolated position, even though Zwingli and his associates readily adopted it, with the single exception of Article X. Nor did his heart or his conscience allow him to ignore the other Lutheran Symbols. The *Augsburg Confession* undoubtedly contained the pure truth of the Gospel, without any admixture of errors; but, owing to the circumstances and the times in which it originated, when it was the great object of Luther and his associates to justify their course in withdrawing from antichristian Rome, it confined itself to those principles which were then specially debated. Hence Calvin, who differed so widely on some points from the fully developed Lutheran creed, readily adopted and subscribed it at Strasburg.—The *Apology*, or Vindication of the Augsburg Confession, set forth, among others, the cardinal doctrine of the Lutheran faith, namely, Justification by faith alone, with extraordinary power and purity. Its full, lucid, and strictly scriptural character has never been successfully con-

troverted. For this very reason the Apology was rejected by Papists, as it now is practically by Rationalists and others who depend on human merit, and are unwilling to give all honor to the Saviour alone.—The *Smalcald Articles*, which Luther prepared in order to set forth the points on which no Protestant or Bible Christian could make any concession to Popery, are also offensive to Papists, to Rationalists, and to the unbelieving and impenitent generally, as they contain the pure evangelical truth, which humbles man, while it exalts God.—*The Two Catechisms* (*the Large and the Small*) furnish materials for popular instruction in revealed truth, which have never been equalled by other manuals, in their adaptation to the object, their fulness, and their purity. Hence, a friend of divine truth, like Arndt, who took so deep an interest in the religious education of the young, could not do otherwise than regard them as of inestimable value. An enemy of the truth would naturally disavow them.—The *Formula of Concord*—the last of the series of Lutheran Confessions of Faith, and the one which Arndt appears to have prized most highly—was intended, as we have shown above, to determine various important points involved in the controversies which had arisen in the bosom of the Lutheran Church before or at the time when he was born. The very circumstance that this Symbol was demanded by the exigencies of the Church, demonstrates that the Augsburg Confession was *not originally designed to be a full and complete confession of faith*, but only a statement of points discussed during the infancy of the Reformation. While it excludes every error which might dishonor God, and confirm the impenitent sinner in his evil course, it completes the previous Symbols, and forms with them an undivided and harmonious whole, exhibiting with brilliancy, power, and spotless purity the Person of the God-Man, Jesus Christ, and glorifies God alone. A confession of faith which so unreservedly unveils the fearful character of Original Sin, while it so fully explains and establishes the true doctrine of the Lord's Supper, would naturally be unwelcome to an impenitent heart; whereas, the devout Arndt found nothing in it but animating and heavenly truth. Hence he desired to be regarded as simply an Evangelical Lutheran Christian,—an adherent of the Formula of Concord.

§ 26. Religion assumed an unusually attractive and beautiful form in Arndt, and is strikingly shadowed forth in his "True Christianity;" this work is an admirable portraiture of his inner man. He was naturally of a grave, but not by any means of an unsocial or gloomy disposition; he would not otherwise have been styled "the Fenelon of Protestantism." Dr. Wildenhahn, whose charming work (entitled *Johannes Arndt*) embodies strictly accurate historical notices, and derives only subordinate matter, such as incidents in domestic life, conversations, etc., from analogy and a fruitful imagination, exhibits him in the true light, as an affectionate husband, a cheerful companion, a generous and self-sacrificing friend of the sick and the poor—in short, as a model in all the relations of life. There

is no exaggeration in this language. He possessed great firmness of character; indeed, a truly heroic spirit dwelt in him. He manifested this trait on many trying occasions—not only when he preferred poverty and exile to a denial of a single Gospel truth or Lutheran usage, but also in many other scenes of conflict. The ravages of the pestilence could not alarm his heroic soul; the open and violent denunciations of enemies he always encountered in the spirit of Him who said: "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why smitest thou me?" (John 18 : 23.) There was a certain calmness or gentleness in his manner of treating his enemies, which, combined with his earnestness and candor in repelling their calumnies, invariably subdued them. Love—love, not to the amiable and good, or to the poor and sorrowing alone, but also to his enemies —was too often and too variously manifested, to leave the spectator in doubt respecting its true source—a genuine faith in Christ, and deep, ardent love to Him. In truth, it is here that the peculiar type of his religion is seen; he lived more in heaven than on earth. The sacerdotal prayer of Christ (John, Chap. 17) was an unfailing source of light, of hope, of peace and joy to his soul. Expressions like these: "As thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us" (ver. 21)—"I in them, and thou in me, etc." (ver. 23), and language like that of Paul: "Christ in you, etc." (Col. 1 : 27), furnished him virtually with the formula: "Christ in me, and I in Christ." Such was his faith in Christ, and such was his love to Him, that he was always calm and hopeful. Hence features appeared in his religious character which his worldly-minded contemporaries could not fully appreciate; they were formed by two different series of Gospel doctrines, which cannot come in conflict, but which relate to two entirely different objects—Christ, the Saviour, and fallen man. No one more sincerely embraced the doctrine of Original Sin, as held by the Lutheran Church, than Arndt did; of this his writings furnish the evidence. His own searching self-examination, constantly maintained in the light of Scripture, revealed to him the utter corruption of his own heart by nature; he found nothing in himself but sin. He was conscious that he could do nothing without Christ, and deeply felt that grace—nothing but grace—could renew his nature, and save him. These convictions induced him to insist with such earnestness, in his Four Books, on the true and genuine repentance of the sinner. At the same time, there was nothing like sternness, gloom, or despondency connected with his sincere and profound self-abasement. For he received with equal strength of faith another series of truths—he believed with all his heart that "after the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to

the hope of eternal life." Tit. 3 : 4–7. Here a new tide of emotions flowed through his soul. Wonder, joy, gratitude, love, took possession of him. His large heart was full of happiness that the lost could be found and saved—that "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." Rom. 5 : 20. And now, when these two distinct principles appear in him in their practical union, the type of his religion is clearly developed. He was grave and earnest, humble, and free from all confidence in himself, for he was "by nature a child of wrath." Eph. 2 : 3. But, on the other hand, God had, in pity and in love, given him a Saviour, engrafted him in that Saviour through Holy Baptism, bestowed on him the fulness of grace, and invited him, as a repentant, believing, pardoned child of Adam, to enter heaven. If sin abounded through the first Adam, grace did, through the second Adam (1 Cor. 15 : 45), much more abound. His writings, therefore, now assume a very cheerful character—*love* is the prevailing theme. Nothing morose appears in them—sorrow for sin and repentance—faith in Christ and love to him, are his soul-inspiring themes, and a cheerful spirit, a sense of fervent, joyful gratitude to God, a heavenly calm, pervade alike his heart and its language as uttered in the "True Christianity."

§ 27. The essential features of vital godliness are always the same; yet "there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit." 1 Cor. 12 : 4. Paul insists on faith; John, on love. Luther's religion was, like that of Arndt, earnest, and yet cheerful. Both were enabled by their personal experience to understand the nature of these Christian virtues, and also the distinction between them. Luther dwells with wonderful power on *faith*. Arndt delights to speak of God's *love*. There is something very beautiful in these different developments of true godliness in the servants of Christ, while the influences of the same divine Spirit controls them alike.

§ 28. It would be an error to suppose that the whole world had risen up in arms against Arndt, after he had assumed his position as an humble and devout Christian. Vast numbers received his First Book on True Christianity with gratitude and joy. It enlightened their minds; it controlled the conscience; it diffused the warmth of life through their souls; and they thanked God that such a book, so full of love, had been given to the world. A comparatively small number of men rose up against him. Certain individuals, such as his colleague, Denecke, a co-pastor of the same congregation in Brunswick, were, no doubt, influenced by envy and personal dislike. But others who opposed him, were by no means governed solely by unworthy personal considerations. Some of them were so much concerned about "questions and strifes of words" (1 Tim. 6 : 4), that they overlooked and misconceived the heavenly-mindedness of Arndt. Others, who did him injustice, were led astray by the infelicity of the times. We have already referred to the disastrous influences of the mysticism and fanaticism which, in addition to other corruptions of the true faith, had

appeared about, and after, the period of the birth of Arndt. For instance, the Swiss physician, Paracelsus (who died as a Roman Catholic in 1541), had published various fantastic and mystical writings, in which he professed that he understood both mundane and supermundane mysteries. Now a certain Lutheran pastor in Saxony, named Weigel, who died in 1588, and who had been confessedly a man of an upright walk and conversation, had yielded to a tendency to the mysticism and theosophy of Paracelsus. He was thus led theoretically to undervalue the doctrines of the church, and to represent them as merely allegorical forms, involving truths not known to ordinary men. The natural results of his theory, if its folly had not been exposed, would unquestionably have seriously affected the authority of the written Word. Before his writings were published, a friend had communicated to Arndt a short extract from them, which contained none of his errors; the author's name had been withheld. Arndt, in his innocence, inserted the passage in his book, and was thus burdened with the odium of all the Weigelian errors; but he was subsequently released from all censure, and his freedom from anything like the mysticism of Weigel was generally conceded.

§ 29. Another ground of the charge of mysticism which his opponents advanced, was found in his repeated references in the "True Christianity" to Tauler. Here, too, Arndt made a brilliant defence, by quoting the great Luther as his authority. The latter had obtained possession of a manuscript without a title or an author's name, which deeply interested him. It dwelt entirely on the communion of the soul with God, and on kindred topics. Luther, whose godliness was healthy and sound, was so much charmed with the work, that he published a part of it at Wittenberg in 1516, and prefixed the title: "A spiritual, noble little work, explaining the distinction between the old and the new man; showing, also, who are the children of Adam and the children of God, and how Adam must die in us, and Christ live in us." During the course of the next year he published the whole work, with an extended Preface of his own, and adopted the title: "A German Theology"; this general title it has since retained. It was received with unbounded favor, and circulated rapidly throughout Europe, for instance, in three English, seven Latin, four French, etc., translations, besides numerous editions of the original German. It was supposed to have been written by Tauler, a very devout man, who was born in the year 1290. His religious tendencies led him, like Luther, to enter a monastery. The sermons and other writings which he left behind, while their general character assign to him a place among those who are denominated "Mystics," nevertheless abound in holy and devout aspirations, and were dictated by a spirit that sought and found peace in the grace of God alone.—Arndt entertained the opinion that the "German Theology" was a production of his pen, and so represents the case in his "True Christianity." It is now, however,

generally conceded, in consequence of an allusion in the work itself to Tauler as a religious teacher of an earlier day, that another person, belonging to a later period, was the writer; his name is still involved in impenetrable darkness.—So, too, it is by no means certain that Thomas á Kempis (born in 1380), was the author of the popular book "On the Imitation of Christ," of which more than two thousand editions in the original language, more than one thousand in French, besides innumerable others in German, English, etc., have been published. The historical arguments, adduced chiefly by French writers, intended to support the claims of the eminent Gerson (born in 1363), as the author, although not entirely conclusive, are still possessed of great weight.—Arndt incidentally remarks in a brief statement respecting the "German Theology," that his copy, printed at Wittenberg in 1520, contained simply the remark that the book had been written by a devout priest of the city of Frankfort, for devotional purposes, but the author's name was withheld. If Luther sanctioned the publication of the "German Theology," Arndt could calmly listen to those who censured him for adopting a similar course. Those extracts at least, which he furnishes in the "True Christianity," are, unquestionably, evangelical and truly edifying.

§ 30. It will, perhaps, gratify the reader to observe the skill with which Wildenhahn, to whom we have already referred, illustrates the childlike simplicity of Arndt's character, by combining fiction with truth. During his Brunswick pastorate, the City Council of Halberstadt sent him an urgent call to become the successor of the deceased Rev. D. Sachse, as pastor of the church of St. Martin in that city. After he had consulted with his intelligent wife, who, like himself, was anxious to withdraw to any spot where peace could be found, he resolved to accept the call; and, in accordance with custom and law, applied to the Brunswick City Council for letters of honorable dismission. When the question was to be decided, Arndt appeared in the presence of the burgomaster, Kale, the syndic, Dr. Roerhand, and other members of the Council, and renewed his request. These details are historically true. Wildenhahn now subjoins the following: "Tell me honestly," said the syndic to him, "have you really, as you allege, taken no steps whatever, in order to obtain this call from Halberstadt?" "Not a single step," said Arndt, in a solemn manner, with his right hand on his heart, "the whole is altogether and exclusively a work of God." But at the moment when he pronounced this solemn declaration, it became evident to those who were present, that a sudden thought had startled him; he changed color; he began to tremble; he suddenly covered his eyes with his left hand. Then, with a voice betraying deep emotion, he added: "Gentlemen, I have borne false witness! I really did do something to obtain this call." "Ah!" said Kale quickly, delighted, as it seemed, to find an opportunity for displaying his official dignity, "You did? Pray, tell us what it was." "I prayed

to the blessed Lord with tears, that he would assign to me some other spot in his vineyard, no matter how insignificant, if I could only there preach his word in peace." "And was *that* all?" inquired the burgomaster, much surprised, and speaking in more gentle tones. "That was all," replied Arndt, "and this is true, as God lives! But, doubtless, I erred here, in impatiently attempting to dictate to God, etc." Such simplicity of character, such perfect ingenuousness, such a wonderful freedom from artifice and disguise, completely disarmed the members of the Council. They now understood better than previously the artlessness and spirituality of the man before them, and, after that scene, they accorded to him entire esteem and confidence.

§ 31. The great work of Arndt—the "True Christianity," has probably never had its equal as a popular book of devotion. Tholuck relates the following anecdote as an illustration of the manner in which even Papists could appreciate the merits of the work. When Prof. Anton, of Halle, visited Madrid in 1687, he examined the library of the Jesuits, and incidentally inquired of the librarian respecting the ascetic writer whom they esteemed more than other authors of devotional works. The latter exhibited a Latin book, the title-page and last leaves of which were wanting, and declared that it was the most edifying work which they possessed. When Anton examined it, he discovered that it was a translation of Arndt's "*True Christianity*"! It is only common justice to allow the author to state the objects which he had in view, in preparing the work. The following passage occurs in a letter which he addressed in the last year of his life to Duke Augustus the Younger, of Brunswick: "In the first place, I wished to withdraw the minds of students and preachers from an inordinate controversial and polemic theology, which has well-nigh assumed the form of an earlier scholastic theology. Secondly, I purposed to conduct Christian believers from lifeless thoughts to such as might bring forth fruit. Thirdly, I wished to guide them onward from mere science and theory, to the actual practice of faith and godliness; and, fourthly, to show them wherein a truly Christian life consists, which accords with the true faith, as well as to explain the apostle's meaning when he says: 'I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me,' etc." (Gal. 2 : 20.)

§ 32. The Rev. Dr. Seiss, the author of "Ecclesia Lutherana, etc.," to whose endeavors the religious public is mainly indebted for the appearance of the present edition, remarks in a recent notice of the work: "This is one of the very greatest and most useful practical books produced by Protestantism. Though written more than two hundred and fifty years ago, it is still unsurpassed in its department. It stands out with marked and superior distinction in the modern ages. Next to the Bible and Luther's Small Catechism, it has been more frequently printed, more widely read, and more influential for good, than any other book,

perhaps, that has ever been written. Boehm has not exaggerated, when he says that its effects, in the conversion of souls, has been such, that an account of them would make a history in itself. Nor can any one candidly read it, without finding on every page, scintillations of the sunlike splendors of a mind bathed in the purity, wisdom, and love of heaven." Mr. Boehm, in the Preface to his translation (which is the basis both of the revision of Mr. Jacques, and of the present edition), remarks, that among the learned men in Great Britain, who had read the Latin translation, the distinguished Dr. Worthington had assigned the first rank among devotional writers to Arndt, and quotes the enthusiastic terms in which he extols that "faithful servant of God, John Arndt." And Mr. Jacques closes the Preface to his revision with the following words: "Divines of all communions and persuasions, have united in their admiration of this delightful production. The late learned Dr. Edward Williams has inserted it in his valuable Appendix to the Christian Preacher: and the Rev. John Wesley made a most copious extract from it, comprised in Vol. I. and II. of his Christian Library."

§ 33. And truly God did not design this great work solely for the comfort and aid of the German nation during the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648), but for all nations and all times. It has been translated into the Latin, Danish, Swedish, Bohemian, Polish, Low Dutch, English, French, Turkish, Russian, Malabar, Tamul, etc., languages. At least two editions of the work in a Latin translation were published in England; the last appeared in 1708, with the following title: "Joannis Arndtii, Theologici, etc.: De vero Christianismo. Libri IV. Cura et studio A. W. Boemi. Lond. 1708." 2 vols. 8vo.—Another Latin edition was published in Germany in 1624. The Tamul translation had the following Latin title: "De vero Christianismo, in Tamulicum convertit Benjamin Schulzius, Missionarius Evangelicus."*

§ 34. The work had made so deep an impression on learned British Christians, who read it in Latin, that the wish was repeatedly and earnestly expressed that it might be made accessible to English readers. At this period, that is, during the reign of Queen Anne of England (who died in 1714), large numbers of German emigrants from the Palatinate passed through England on their way to the provinces of New York and

* The first Latin translation, published at Leipsic in 1704, was prepared by the joint labors of Dr. J. G. Dorscheus and Dr. J. G. Pritius. (The latter published about the same time his *Introductio in lectionem N. T.*, etc., which was highly valued, and passed through several editions; our own copy is dated 1737.) An extended Preface was furnished by Pritius. The whole is presented in a single and very clumsy volume.—The Latin translation published by Mr. Boehm in London, 1708, and dedicated to his patron, Prince George, appeared in two neat and convenient volumes, and is far superior to the continental edition. Copies of these editions, which are now rarely to be found, were obtained by us from the very rich collection of such works, belonging to Rev. Dr. C. P. Krauth, of West Philadelphia.

Pennsylvania. The Rev. Anthony William Boehm, a German Lutheran clergyman, had previously been appointed as the court chaplain of Prince George of Denmark, the consort of Queen Anne. His enlightened zeal and devout heart led him to take a deep interest, not only in the temporal, but also in the spiritual welfare of these pilgrims, who were on their way to the wilds of North America. He accordingly supplied them, by the aid of certain like-minded friends, with German Bibles and Hymn Books, and also with German copies of Arndt's "True Christianity," as well as with other books of devotion. This interesting fact is mentioned in the letters of Dr. Muhlenberg, published in the well-known *Halle Reports* (*Hallische Nachrichten*, pp. 665, 793). But Mr. Boehm also resolved to furnish the people, in the midst of whom he lived, with the great work of his favorite author, in their own language, and accordingly prepared an English translation, which was first printed in London in 1712.

§ 35. It would be unjust to the memory of this excellent man, if we should fail to refer to his literary labors. His high office at the royal court of England, is an evidence of his personal merit. He was not only a devout and faithful preacher of the Gospel, but also an author who acquired distinction. In 1734 he published a very valuable work in the German language, entitled: "Eight Books, on the Reformation of the Church in England, extending from the year 1526, under Henry VIII., to the reign of Charles II." In a very beautiful eulogy, in manuscript, found in the volume before us, the writer refers to the successful efforts of Mr. Boehm to provide for the education of the children of the poor in his vicinity. He died May 27, 1722, in his fiftieth year, after having faithfully labored in the service of Christ. He sustained, with eminent success, the Danish Lutheran missionaries in Tranquebar, by sending pecuniary aid obtained in London, as well as religious publications. Besides his great German historical work, which is the complement of Burnet's "History of the Reformation of the Church of England," he also published several English compositions, such as a "Sermon on the doctrine of Original Sin, Eph. 4 : 22," printed in London, 1711, and a "Sermon on the Duty of the Reformation (Jubilee), Rev. 18 : 4," London, 1718, besides various religious works in the German language.

§ 36. About the beginning of the present century, the Rev. Calvin Chaddock, who resided in Hanover, Massachusetts, obtained a copy of Mr. Boehm's translation, "accidentally," as he says, and found it to be so valuable, that he resolved to issue an American edition, which accordingly appeared in 1809, Boston. In his short Preface he remarks, with great truth, that the language of the translation "appears to be somewhat ancient, and the sentiments in some few instances obscure." He adds, in reference to his own agency: "The only alterations which have been made, are such as respect redundant and obsolete words, orthography, the addi-

tion of some words, and the transposition of some sentences; that the ideas of the translator might appear more conspicuous." He might have, with great advantage, been even more liberal than he was, in correcting the style; it still remained in numerous passages heavy and obscure. As the style, even of the original German, is somewhat antiquated, and as, besides, occasional obscurities and repetitions occur, a later successor in one of Arndt's pastoral charges, the Rev. J. F. Fedderson, assumed the task of revising and abridging the whole of the original German, improving or modernizing the style, and occasionally adding new matter. The result of his labors does not appear to have received the entire approbation of the German religious world; the original and unaltered work continues so popular, that no permanent place has been secured for the substitute. A portion of Fedderson's production was translated and published in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, in 1834, by the Rev. John N. Hoffman, Pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran congregation of that place. The translation was never completed. The part which was given, consisting mainly of Book I., has long since been out of print.

§ 37. In the year 1815, a new edition of Mr. Boehm's English translation was issued in London (evidently without any reference to Mr. Chaddock's American edition), by William Jacques, A.M., who had already distinguished himself by his translation, from the Latin, of A. H. Francke's "Guide to the Reading and Study of the Holy Scriptures," of which a reprint, in a very unattractive form, and with omissions, appeared in Philadelphia, in 1823. He took Mr. Boehm's translation as the "ground-work," which, as he states in his Preface, he did not "edit either hastily or negligently. There is not a single page, nor a single paragraph," he continues, "which has not been subjected to scrutiny," etc. Nevertheless, Mr. Jacques, who does not appear to have compared the translation with the original German, made only verbal changes, which, as it is evident, materially improve the style. But he allowed all the additions of Mr. Boehm, which are generally quite tautological, and various inaccuracies in thought and expression to remain. So many antiquated expressions were retained, that it would have been inexpedient to reprint the work precisely as Mr. Jacques allowed the text to remain. Besides, he curtailed the full titles of the several chapters, and, with very few exceptions, omitted the important and appropriate texts which Arndt had prefixed respectively to the latter. These circumstances, in connection with others, such as numerous typographical errors, especially in the Scripture references, plainly indicated that a revision of the whole was necessary, before the present edition could be presented to the public.

§ 38. The editor of the present American edition took that of Mr. Jacques as the basis of the translation, but compared every sentence with the original German. He found some cases in which valuable matter had been omitted, and was occasionally required to supply sentences that had

been mutilated or suppressed. But he erased all the verbal additions, and the clauses, or sentences, inserted by Mr. Boehm, where it seemed to have been the object of the latter only to explain remarks that were already perfectly lucid, or to add emphasis by the insertion of adjectives, etc., or else to impart beauty by the adoption of poetical terms or phrases, which were inconsistent with the severe simplicity of Arndt's style. He even represents the author, on one occasion, as quoting from the "Homilies" of the Church of England, which Arndt undoubtedly never read, and certainly does not mention in the original. The American editor has, also, at the request of several friends, who took an interest in securing the publication of the present edition, prepared a somewhat copious INDEX. One of the Latin editions (London, 1708) contains an index, adapted only to its own pages. Another, in German, is found in some of the German editions, for instance, in that of Nuremberg, 1762, also adapted to the pages of the particular edition only. As the American editor found none in English, and preferred to adapt the new Index, prepared by him, to the work itself (specifying the Book, Chapter, and Section), he accordingly completed his task on this plan, after a considerable expenditure of time and labor. It is somewhat difficult to prepare an Index for a work which is so exclusively devotional in its character as the present, and in which the author does not intend to discuss subjects in a strictly scientific manner. Arndt, for instance, employs terms which, when defined with precision, indicate different shades of thought, almost as if they were synonymous (*e. g.*, the *grace*, *mercy*, *goodness*, *love*, etc., of God), and often repeats the same thought in different language. For this we can easily account, when we recollect that the materials of the work were taken from a series of popular sermons of the author, delivered at intervals. The editor allows himself to hope that the Index which he has prepared, may occasionally be of service to the reader.

§ 39. But even after having made numerous changes on *every page* of the old translation before him, the American editor is conscious that a critical eye will discover many imperfections in the style. It is often antiquated and heavy, and sometimes even quaint. Nevertheless, in all these instances he allowed the English text to remain as he found it, contenting himself with the correction of orthographical and syntactical inaccuracies, the rectification of Scripture references, the errors in which he found to be unusually numerous, the correction of quotations in accordance with the authorized English version of the Bible, in the many cases in which Mr. Boehm, or one of his assistants, translated from Luther's German version, or quoted the English version from memory, etc., etc.

§ 40. It is eminently proper that a new edition of Arndt's "True Christianity" should appear during the present Jubilee year of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, and that it should be undertaken and conducted to a successful issue by members of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Penn-

sylvania. The deep spirituality of Arndt, and his active and pure faith, can be fully understood and appreciated only when we reflect on the doctrinal system to which he had given his heart, and to which we have referred above. This orthodox system found no favor, at a later period, among the Rationalists; they rejected the doctrines of the Bible respecting the depravity of human nature, the divinity of Christ, the efficacy of the divinely appointed means of grace, and similar truths, and grievously complained of the violence which, as they treacherously alleged, was offered to their conscience, when the demand was made, that if they claimed to belong to the Lutheran Church, to occupy its pulpits, and to receive their support from it, they ought also to adopt its faith. Their influence is happily decaying in Europe, and the restoration of the doctrines of the Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church to authority, is coincident with the new and healthy religious life of the Lutheran Church in Germany, Hungary, Scandinavia, and Russia. The sincere Christian, John Arndt, whom we heard protesting before God, with his last breath, as described above, that he believed only the doctrines of the Symbolical Books of the Lutheran Church, and *all* those doctrines, little thought that more than two centuries afterwards, in the remote Western continent of America, men would arise who would not only reject with scorn "all the other Symbolical Books," which he revered, but also speak contemptuously of the Augsburg Confession and its holy doctrines.

§ 41. The doctrinal system which Arndt so sincerely revered, was brought to this country by the Lutheran pastors who visited our shores at a very early period. Dr. Henry Melchior Muhlenberg, an eminently enlightened and holy man, was enabled, by his well-disciplined mind and great administrative powers, to create order among the scattered Lutherans whom he found in this country. He was exceedingly zealous in maintaining the purity of the Lutheran faith, to which he owed all his peace and his hopes. He gave unusual prominence to the Symbolical Books—to *all* of them, mentioned by name—in the various constitutions of congregations organized or influenced by him, and very properly claimed that none who rejected them could honestly bear the name of *Lutherans.* We will give only one illustration, of many which might be adduced, to show the fidelity with which he held to the Lutheran Symbolical Books, as enumerated by Arndt in the last paragraph of his Preface to Book I., in this volume. Dr. Muhlenberg states in an official Report for the year 1747, which he transmitted to Halle (*Hall. Nachr.*, pp. 234, 235), that he had visited a congregation in Maryland, in which great dissensions prevailed at the time, occasioned by efforts made by certain individuals to alienate the Lutherans from their faith and church. He says, "Before we commenced public worship, I asked for the Church Record, and wrote certain propositions and articles in it in the English language, and among other statements, made the following: That our German Lutherans held

to the holy Word of God, in the prophetic and apostolical writings; further, to the unaltered Augsburg Confession, and the other Symbolical Books, etc.* I then read the same publicly to the congregation, and explained it to them in the German language, and added, that every one who desired to be, and to remain, *such* a Lutheran, should subscribe his name." He informs us that the genuine Lutherans readily subscribed; the rest, who had unlutheran sympathies, withheld their names.

§ 42. An unhappy change occurred after Dr. Muhlenberg's day. The Symbolical Books, which he and his contemporaries received, believed, and sustained in their whole extent, with religious veneration, existed at that time only in Latin and German. They gradually receded from the view of many pastors of the church; individuals were received into the ranks of the ministry, who had never studied them; doctrines and usages, hitherto unknown to the church, were introduced into many Lutheran congregations. At one period several of the most intelligent pastors yielded, to a certain extent, to rationalistic influences; then, the opposite extreme, of fanaticism, gained adherents; both rationalism and fanaticism were alike hostile to "the unaltered Augsburg Confession and the other Symbolical Books," and a strange combination of elements, derived partly from rationalism, and partly from fanaticism, temporarily held sway. Dependence was now placed on human measures and inventions, designed for the conversion of sinners and the edification of believers, rather than on the divinely appointed means of grace, which men like Arndt and Muhlenberg recognized as the only channels through which the Divine Spirit exercises his influence. If they had lived among us during the second, third, and fourth decades of this century, when their doctrines, and their mode of preaching, were regarded by many as antiquated, or unsuited to a supposed higher grade of religious development, they would have readily predicted the results—fanaticism, latitudinarianism in doctrine, an evanescent emotional religion, and, by consequence, the rejection, in whole or in part, of the Augsburg Confession and the other Symbolical Books.

§ 43. God, in his mercy, has interposed. The doctrines which Arndt, Muhlenberg, and men of the old faith, regarded as the life-blood of a healthy, scriptural religion, are regaining their authority. Many still

* The term "Symbol"—a word derived from the Greek—was applied, at a very early period of the Christian Church, by Greek-speaking Christians, to the "Apostles' Creed," in the sense of a "token or mark of recognition." He who knew and adopted that Creed, viewed thus as a *symbol*, was recognized as a Christian; he who knew it not, or who rejected it, was not a Christian, but a Jew or heathen. After diverse creeds had been formed and adopted in the course of time, the word SYMBOL was retained, as applicable to a particular *creed* or *confession of faith*. Hence the term "Symbols," or its equivalent, "Symbolical Books," was gradually applied to the several Lutheran Creeds which Arndt mentions with such reverence and love, as we have seen above.

reject them; the old faith of the church—Bible truth, is unwelcome to an ignorant, rationalistic, and unconverted heart. But others have been taught by observation and experience that mere human measures and inventions cannot conduct to a healthy and permanent religion, and that divine truth, as taught in the Scriptures, and set forth in our Symbolical Books, and the other means of grace given to the Church by its divine Head, are the only sources from which such a healthy religion can proceed. In this spirit Arndt wrote the "True Christianity," and by this spirit the Synod of Pennsylvania is animated. This ecclesiastical body desires to take away all glory from man, and to give it all to Christ. One of the results of its attachment to our ancient and holy faith, is the publication of the present volume, in which the author so eloquently and affectionately urges all men to repent, to believe in Christ, and to lead a holy life.

§ 44. The divine blessing has so remarkably attended the use of Arndt's "True Christianity," in the original language, and in its various translations, that the present editor humbly entertains the hope that the time and labor expended by him in preparing this new edition, may also be of avail. And he prays that the "True Christianity" may continue the work which it has already performed, and instruct, guide, and comfort anew the souls of its readers, to the praise and glory of God.

C. F. S.

Philadelphia, August, 1868.

THE AUTHOR'S

PREFACE TO THE FIRST BOOK.

CHRISTIAN READER! That the holy Gospel is subjected, in our age, to a great and shameful abuse, is fully proved by the ungodly and impenitent life of those who loudly boast of Christ and of his word, while their unchristian life resembles that of persons who dwell in a land of heathens and not of Christians. Such an ungodly course of conduct furnished me with an occasion for writing this Treatise; it was my object to show to plain readers wherein true Christianity consists, namely, in the exhibition of a true, living, and active faith, which manifests itself in genuine godliness and the fruits of righteousness. I desired to show that we bear the name of *Christians*, not only because we ought to believe in Christ, but also because the name implies that we live in Christ, and that He lives in us. I further desired to show that true repentance proceeds from the inmost centre of the heart; that the heart, mind, and affections must be changed; that we must be conformed to Christ and his holy Gospel; and that we must be renewed by the word of God, and become new creatures. For even as every seed produces fruit of a like nature, so the word of God must daily produce in us new spiritual fruits. If we become new creatures by faith, we must live in accordance with our new birth. In a word, Adam must die, and Christ must live, in us. It is not sufficient to acquire a knowledge of the word of God; it is also our duty to obey it practically, with life and power.

2. There are many who suppose that Theology is merely a science, or an art of words, whereas it is a living experience and practical exercise.—Every one now aims at acquiring eminence and distinction in the world; but no one is willing to learn how to be devout. Every one now seeks out men of great learning, who can teach arts, languages, and wisdom; but no one is willing to learn from our only Teacher, Jesus Christ, how to become meek and sincerely humble; and yet His holy and living example is the true rule for our life and conduct, and, indeed, constitutes the highest wisdom and knowledge; so that we can with truth declare, "The pure life of Christ opens all knowledge to us."

3. Every one is very willing to be a servant of Christ; but no one will consent to be his follower. And yet he says: "If any man serve me, let him follow me." John 12 : 26. Hence, he who truly serves and loves Christ, will also follow him; and he who loves Christ, will also love the example of his holy life, his humility, meekness, patience, as well as the cross, shame, and contempt which he endured, although the flesh may thereby suffer pain. And although we cannot, in our present weakness, perfectly imitate the holy and exalted life of Christ (which, indeed, is not intended in my

Book), nevertheless, we ought to love it, and long to imitate it more fully; for thus we live in Christ, and Christ lives in us, according to the words of St. John: "He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked." 1 John 2 : 6. It is now the disposition of the world to acquire a knowledge of all things; but that which is better than all other knowledge, namely, "to know the love of Christ" (Eph. 3 : 19), no one desires to acquire. But no man can love Christ, who does not imitate his holy life. There are many—a majority, indeed, of men in this world—who are ashamed of the holy example of Christ, namely, of his humility and lowly condition; that is, they are ashamed of the Lord Jesus Christ; of them he says: "Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed," etc. Mark 8 : 38. Christians now desire a Christ of imposing appearance, who is magnificent, rich, and conformed to the world; but no one desires to receive, to confess, and to follow the poor, meek, despised, and lowly Christ. He will, therefore, hereafter say: "I never knew you" (Matt. 7 : 23); ye were not willing to know me in my humility, and therefore I do not know you in your pride.

4. Not only, however, is ungodliness, in all its forms, at variance with Christ and true Christianity, but it is also the cause of the daily accumulation of the displeasure of God, and of the penalties which he inflicts; insomuch that he fits all creatures to be avengers, and that heaven and earth, fire and water, are made to contend against us; so that all nature is thereby sorely distressed, and well-nigh overwhelmed. Hence, a season of affliction must be expected; war, famine, and pestilence; yea, the last plagues are coming in with such violence, that we are exposed to the assaults of nearly every creature. For even as the terrible plagues of the Egyptians overtook them before the redemption and departure of the children of Israel from Egypt, so, too, before the redemption of the children of God occurs, dreadful and unheard-of plagues will overtake the ungodly and impenitent. It is therefore high time to repent, to begin another course of life, to turn from the world to Christ, to believe truly in him, and to lead a Christian life in him, so that we may securely "dwell in the secret place of the Most High, and abide under the shadow of the Almighty." Ps. 91 : 1. Such is also the exhortation of the Lord: "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things." Luke 21 : 36. The same is also testified in Ps. 112 : 7.

5. Now, to this end, my Christian reader, this Book may, to a certain extent, serve thee as a guide, showing thee not only how thou mayest, through faith in Christ, obtain the remission of thy sins, but also how thou mayest avail thyself of the grace of God, in order to lead a holy life; and how thou mayest demonstrate and adorn thy faith by a Christian walk and conversation. For true Christianity consists, not in words, nor in any external show, but in a living faith, from which proceed fruits meet for repentance, and all manner of Christian virtues, as from Christ himself. For as faith is hidden from human view, and is invisible, it must be manifested by its fruits; inasmuch as faith derives from Christ all that is good, righteous, and blessed.

6. Now, when faith waits for the blessings which are promised to it, the offspring of this faith is *hope*. For what else is hope but a constant and persevering expectation, in faith, of the blessings which are promised? But when faith communicates to a neighbor the blessings which it has itself received, *love* is the offspring of such a faith, imparting to the neighbor that which it has itself received from God; and when faith endures the trial of the cross, and submits to the will of God, it brings forth *patience*. But when it sighs under the burden of the cross, or offers thanks to God for mercies which it has received, it gives birth to *prayer*. When it compares the power of God, on the one hand, with the misery of man, on the other, and submits unresistingly to the will of God, *humility* is the fruit. And when this faith diligently labors that it may not lose the grace of God, or, as St. Paul says: "worketh out salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil. 2 : 12), then the *fear of God* is the result.

7. Thus thou seest that all the Christian virtues are the offspring of faith, proceed from faith, and cannot be separated from faith, their common source, if they are indeed genuine, living, and Christian virtues, proceeding ultimately from God, from Christ, and from the Holy Spirit. Hence no work can be acceptable to God without faith in Christ. For how can true hope, sincere love, persevering patience, earnest prayer, Christian humility, and a childlike fear of God, exist without faith? All must be drawn from Christ, the well of salvation (Isa. 12 : 3), through faith, as well righteousness, as all the fruits of righteousness. But take great care, my reader, that thou do not connect thy works, the virtues which thou hast commenced to practise, or the gifts of the new life, with thy justification before God. For in this matter, man's works, merit, gifts, and virtue, however lovely these may appear to be, have no efficacy; our justification depends solely on the exalted and perfect merit of Jesus Christ, apprehended by faith, even as it is set forth in Chap. V, XIX, XXXIV, and XLI, of this Book, and in the first three chapters of Book II. Take great care, therefore, not to confound the righteousness of faith, on the one hand, and the righteousness of a Christian life, on the other; but rather to make a clear distinction between them; for here the whole foundation of our Christian religion is involved. Still, thy repentance must be the great concern of thy life, for otherwise thou hast no true faith, such as daily purifies, changes, and amends the heart. Thou must, moreover, know that the consolations of the Gospel cannot be effectually applied, unless they have been preceded by a genuine godly sorrow, the result of which is a bruised and contrite heart; for we read that "to the poor the gospel is preached." Luke 7 : 22. How, indeed, can faith give life to the heart, unless that heart has been previously put to death by sincere sorrow and a thorough knowledge of sin? Do not, therefore, imagine that repentance is a slight and easy work. Remember the solemn and severe language of the Apostle Paul, when he commands us to mortify and crucify the flesh, with the affections and lusts, to offer the body as a sacrifice, to die unto sin, to be crucified unto the world. Col. 3 : 5; Rom. 6 : 6; 12 : 1; 1 Pet. 2 : 24; Gal. 5 : 24; 6 : 14. Truly, none of these things can result, when we gratify the flesh.

Nor do the holy prophets employ cheerful terms when they call for a contrite and broken heart, and say: "Rend your heart—weep and lament." Joel 2 : 13, 17; Jer. 4 : 8. But where is such repentance now exhibited? The Lord Jesus Christ, when alluding to it, demands that we should deny ourselves, and renounce all that we have, if we desire to be his disciples. Luke 9 : 23; Matt. 16 : 24. Verily, all this can never proceed from a gay, trifling, and light mind; of this the evidence may be found in the seven Penitential Psalms of David. The Scriptures abound in illustrations of the jealousy of God, who demands both repentance and its fruits, without which eternal salvation cannot be obtained. But afterwards the consolations of the Gospel manifest their power. And both such repentance, and such consolation, are solely the work of the Spirit of God, through the Word.

8. Now this Book which I have written, specially treats of such sincere and earnest repentance of the heart, of the exhibition of faith in the life and conduct, and of the spirit of love which should animate all the acts of the Christian; for that which proceeds from Christian love, is, at the same time, the fruit of faith. It is true that I have referred to some earlier writers, such as Tauler, Thomas á Kempis, and others, who may seem to ascribe more than is due to human ability and works; but my whole Book is designed to counteract such an error. I would, therefore, kindly request the Christian reader to remember the great object for which I wrote this Book. He will find that its main purpose is this: To teach the reader how to perceive the hidden and connate abomination of Original Sin; to set forth distinctly our misery and helplessness; to teach us to put no trust in ourselves or our ability; to take away everything from ourselves, and to ascribe all to Christ, so that He alone may dwell in us, work all things in us, alone live in us, and create all things in us, because he is the beginning, middle, and end, of our conversion and salvation. All this has been plainly and abundantly explained in many passages of this Book; and, at the same time, the doctrines of the Papists, Synergists, and Majorists, have been expressly refuted and rejected. The doctrine, moreover, of justification by faith, has been set forth in this Book, and especially in Book II., in the most pointed and explicit manner. In order, however, to obviate all misapprehensions, I have subjected the present edition to a very careful revision, and I beg the reader to receive the editions which have appeared in Frankfort and other places, in the sense in which the present Magdeburg edition is to be received. I also affirm, that this Book, as well in all other articles and points, as also in the articles of Free Will, and of the Justification of a poor sinner before God, is not to be understood in any other manner than in accordance with the Symbolical Books of the churches of the Augsburg Confession, namely, the first Unaltered Augsburg Confession, the Apology, the Smalcald Articles, the Two Catechisms of Luther, and the Formula of Concord.

May God enlighten us all by his Holy Spirit, so that we may be sincere and without offence, both in our faith and in our life, till the day of Christ (which is near at hand), being filled with the fruits of righteousness, unto the glory and praise of God! Amen.

TRUE CHRISTIANITY.

BOOK I.

WHEREIN TRUE CHRISTIANITY, SINCERE SORROW FOR SIN, REPENTANCE, FAITH, AND THE HOLY LIFE OF THE TRUE CHRISTIAN, ARE CONSIDERED.

CHAPTER I.

SHOWING WHAT THE IMAGE OF GOD IN MAN IS.

Be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and . . . put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.—EPH. 4 : 23, 24.

THE image of God in man, is the conformity of the soul of man, of his spirit and mind, of his understanding and will, and of all his faculties and powers, both bodily and mental, to God and the Holy Trinity. For the decree of the Holy Trinity was thus expressed: "*Let us* make man in our image, after our likeness," etc. Gen. 1 : 26.

2. It is evident, therefore, that, when man was created, the image of the Trinity was impressed on him, in order that the holiness, righteousness, and goodness of God, might shine forth in his soul; diffuse abundant light through his understanding, will, and affections; and visibly appear even in his life and conversation: that, consequently, all his actions, both inward and outward, might breathe nothing but divine love, purity, and power, and, in short, that the life of man upon earth might resemble that of the angels in heaven, who are always engaged in doing the will of their Heavenly Father. In thus impressing his image on man, God designed to delight and rejoice in him, just as a father rejoices in a child born after his own image: for as a parent, beholding himself, or *another self*, in his offspring, cannot but feel the greatest complacency and delight; so, when God beheld the express character of his own Person reflected in an image of himself, his "delights were with the sons of men." Prov. 8 : 31. Thus it was God's chief pleasure to look on man, in whom he rejoiced, and rested, as it were, from all his labor; considering him as the great *masterpiece* of his creation, and knowing that in the perfect innocence and beauty of man, the excellency of his own glory would be fully set forth. And this blessed communion our first parents and their posterity were al-

ways to have enjoyed, had they continued in the likeness of God, and rested in him and in his will; who, as he was their author, was also to be their end.

3. It undoubtedly is the essential property of every image, that it be a just representation of the object which it is intended to express; and as the reflection in a mirror is vivid in a degree proportioned to the clearness of the mirror itself, so the image of God becomes more or less visible, according to the purity of the soul in which it is beheld.

4. Hence God originally created man perfectly pure and undefiled; that so the divine image might be beheld in him, not as an empty, lifeless shadow in a glass, but as a true and living image of the invisible God, and as the likeness of his inward, hidden, and unutterable beauty. There was an image of the wisdom of God, in the *understanding* of man; of his goodness, gentleness, and patience, in the *spirit* of man; of his divine love and mercy, in the *affections* of man's heart. There was an image of the righteousness and holiness, the justice and purity of God, in the *will* of man; of his kindness, clemency, and truth, in all the *words* and *actions* of man; of his almighty power, in man's *dominion* over the earth, and inferior creatures; and lastly, there was an image of God's eternity, in the *immortality* of the human soul.

5. From the divine image thus implanted in him, man should have acquired the knowledge both of *God* and of *himself*. Hence he might have learned, that God, his Creator, is all in all, the Being of beings, and the chief and only BEING, from whom all created beings derive their existence, and in whom, and by whom, all things that are, subsist. Hence, also, he might have known, that God, as the Original of man's nature, is all that *essentially*, of which he himself was but the image and representation. For since man was to bear the image of the divine goodness, it follows that God is the sovereign and universal goodness *essentially* (Matt. 19 : 17); and, consequently, that God is essential love, essential life, and essential holiness, to whom alone (because he is all this *essentially*), worship and praise, honor and glory, might, majesty, dominion, and virtue, are to be ascribed: whereas these do not appertain to the creature, nor belong to anything but God alone.

6. From this image of the Divine Being, man should further have acquired the knowledge of *himself*. He should have considered what a vast difference there was between God and himself. Man is not God, but God's *image;* and the image of God ought to represent nothing but God. He is a portraiture of the Divine Being; a character, an image, in which God alone should be seen and glorified. Nothing therefore ought to live in man, besides God. Nothing but the Divinity should stir, will, love, think, speak, act, or rejoice in him. For if anything besides God live or work in man, he ceases to be the image of God; and becomes the image of that which thus lives and acts within him. If therefore a man would become, and continue to be, the image of God, he must wholly surrender himself to the Divine Being, and submit entirely to his will; he must suffer God to work in him whatsoever he pleases; so that, by denying his own will, he may do the will of his Heavenly Father without reserve, being entirely resigned to God, and willing to become a holy in-

strument in his hands, to do his will and his work. Such a man follows not his *own* will, but the will of God; he loves not himself, but God; seeks not his own honor, but the honor of God. He covets no estates nor affluence for himself, but refers all to the Supreme Good; and so being contented to possess him, rises above the love of the creature and the world. And thus ought man to divest himself of all love of himself and the world, that God alone may be all in him, and work all in him, by his Holy Spirit. Herein consisted the perfect innocence, purity, and holiness of man. For, what greater innocence can there be, than that a man should do, not his own will, but the will of his Heavenly Father? Or what greater purity, than that man should suffer God to work in him, and to do everything according to His pleasure? Or, what greater holiness, than to become an instrument in the hands of the Spirit of God? To resemble a child, in whose breast self-love and self-honor do not yet prevail, is, in truth, the highest simplicity.

7. Of this entire devotedness to the Divine will, our Lord Jesus Christ, while he sojourned in our world, was a *perfect* example. He sacrificed his own will to God his Father, in blameless obedience, humility, and meekness; readily depriving himself of all honor and esteem, of all self-interest and self-love, of all pleasure and joy; and leaving God alone, to think, speak, and act, in him, and by him. In short, he invariably made the will and pleasure of God his own, as the Father himself testified by a voice from Heaven: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Matt. 3: 17. The Lord Jesus Christ, blessed forever, is the true Image of God, in whom nothing appears but God himself, and such manifestations as are agreeable to his nature; namely, love, mercy, long-suffering, patience, meekness, gentleness, righteousness, holiness, consolation, life, and everlasting blessedness: for by him, the invisible God was willing to be discovered and made known to man. He is indeed the image of God in a more sublime sense; that is, according to his *Divinity*, by virtue of which, he is himself very God, the express and essential image of his Father's glory, in the infinite splendor of the uncreated light. Heb. 1: 3. But of this point no more can at present be said: our design being to speak of him only as he lived and conversed in his holy *humanity*, while he tabernacled upon the earth.

8. It was in such a holy innocence as this, that the image of God was, in the beginning, conferred on Adam, which he should have preserved in true humility and obedience. Sufficient it surely was for him, that he was made capable of all the benefits of the divine image; of sincere and unmixed love and delight; of undisturbed and solid tranquillity of mind; of power, fortitude, peace, light, and life. But not duly reflecting that he himself was not the *chief good*, but merely a mirror of the Godhead, formed purposely to receive the reflection of the divine nature, he erected himself into a *God;* and thus choosing to be the highest *good* to himself, he was precipitated into the greatest of all evils, being deprived of this inestimable image, and alienated from that communion with God, which, by virtue of it, he before enjoyed.

9. Had self-will, self-love, and self-honor, been excluded, the image of God could not have departed from man; but the Divine Being would have continued to be his sole glory,

honor, and praise. As everything is capable of its like and not of its contrary, and in its like acquiesces and delights, so man, being in the similitude of God, was thereby prepared to receive God into himself, who was also ready to communicate himself to man, with all the treasures of his goodness; goodness being of all things the most communicative of itself.

10. Finally, man ought to have learned from the image of God, that by means of it he is united to God; and that in this union, his true and everlasting tranquillity, his rest, peace, joy, life, and happiness alone consist. He should have learned that all restlessness of mind and vexation of spirit, arise from nothing but a breach of this union, by which he ceases to be the image of God; for man no sooner turns to the creature, than he is deprived of that eternal good which is to be derived from God alone.

CHAPTER II.

OF THE FALL OF ADAM.

As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.—Rom. 5:19.

THE fall of Adam was disobedience to God, by which man turned away from the Divine Being to himself, and robbed God of the honor due to him alone, in that he *himself* thought to be *as God*. But while he thus labored to advance himself, he was stripped of that divine image, which the Creator had so freely conferred on him; divested of hereditary righteousness; and bereaved of that holiness with which he was originally adorned; becoming, as it regards his *understanding*, dark and blind; as to his *will*, stubborn and perverse; and as to all the powers and faculties of the soul, entirely alienated from God. This evil has infected the whole mass of mankind, by means of a fleshly generation; and has been inherited by all men. The obvious consequence arising from this is, that man is become spiritually dead and the child of wrath and damnation, until redeemed from this miserable state by Jesus Christ. Let not then any who are called Christians deceive themselves with regard to Adam's fall. Let them be cautious, how they attempt to extenuate or lessen the transgression of Adam, as though it were a small sin, a thing of little consequence, and, at the worst, but the eating of an apple. Let them rather be assured, that the guilt of Adam was that of Lucifer, namely, *he would be as God:* and that it was the same most grievous, heinous, and hateful sin in both.

2. This apostasy (for it was nothing less), was, at first, generated in the heart, and then made manifest by the eating of the forbidden fruit. Though man was numbered with the sons of God; though he came forth from the hands of the Almighty spotless both in body and in soul, and was the most glorious object in the creation; though, to crown all, he was not only a son, but the *delight* of God; yet not knowing how to rest satisfied with these

high privileges, he attempted to invade Heaven, that he might be yet higher; and nothing less would suffice him, than to exalt himself like unto God. Hence, he conceived in his heart enmity and hatred against the Divine Being, his Creator and Father, whom, had it been in his power, he was disposed utterly to undo. Who could commit a sin more detestable than this? or what greater abomination is there, that it was possible to meditate?

3. Hence it was, that man became inwardly like Satan himself, bearing his likeness in the heart; since both had now committed the same sin, both having rebelled against the majesty of Heaven. Man no more exhibits an image of God, but rather that of the Devil; he no longer is an instrument in the hands of God, but is become an organ of Satan, and is thereby rendered capable of every species of diabolical wickedness: so that, having lost that image which was heavenly, spiritual, and divine, he is altogether earthly, sensual, and brutish. For the devil, designing to imprint his own image upon man, fascinated him so entirely by a train of enticing and deceitful words, that man permitted him to sow that hateful seed in his soul, which is hence termed the seed of the serpent; and by which is chiefly meant, self-love, self-will, and the ambition of being as God. On this account it is, that the Scriptures term those who are intoxicated with self-love, "a generation of vipers." Matt. 3 : 7. And all those who are of a proud and devilish nature, "the seed (progeny) of the serpent." So the Almighty, addressing the serpent, says, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed." Gen. 3 : 15.

4. From this seed of the serpent nothing but deadly and horrible fruit can possibly proceed; namely, Satan's image, the children of Belial, the children of the devil. John 8 : 44. As in every natural seed, how minute soever it may be, are contained, in a most wonderful and hidden manner, the nature and properties of the future plant, all its parts and proportions, its branches, leaves, and flowers, in miniature; so in that seed of the serpent, Adam's self-love and disobedience (which has passed unto all his posterity by a fleshly generation), there lies, as it were in embryo, the tree of death, with its branches, leaves, and flowers, and those innumerable fruits of unrighteousness which grow upon it. In short, the whole image of Satan is secretly traced out there, with all its marks, characters, and properties.

5. If we observe a little child with attention, we shall see how this natural corruption displays itself from its very birth; and how self-will and disobedience especially discover themselves, and break forth into actions that effectually witness to the hidden root from which they spring. Let us consider the child further, as it grows up to maturer years. Observe the natural selfishness of the youth, his inbred ambition, his thirst after worldly glory, his love of applause, his pursuit of revenge, and his proneness to deceit and falsehood. And now these evils multiply. Soon may be discovered in him vanity, arrogance, pride, blasphemy, vain oaths, awful curses, frauds, skepticism, infidelity, contempt of God and his holy Word, and disobedience to parents and magistrates: wrath and contentiousness; hatred and envy; revenge and murder, and all kinds of cruelty; especially if outward occasions offer themselves, and call forth

into action this latent and deadly seed, and the various evils of Adam's depraved nature. In proportion as such occasions continue to present themselves, we shall observe the appearance of other vices; wantonness, adulterous thoughts, lewd imaginations, obscene discourses, lascivious gestures, and all "the works of the flesh:" we shall behold drunkenness, rioting, and every species of intemperance; fickleness, excessive wantonness, and all that can please the appetite, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. And besides these, there may soon be discovered, covetousness, extortion, chicanery, sophistry, imposture, and every description of sinister practice; together with knavery, overreaching in trade, and, in short, the whole troop, or rather army of sins, iniquities, and crimes, which are so various and so many, that it is impossible to recount or declare the number of them; according to the words of the prophet Jeremiah, "the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?" Ch. 17:9. And if to those already enumerated there be added, in the last place, the seducing and false spirits; then may be observed schisms in the church, wicked and dangerous heresies, yea, the abjuring of God and Christ, idolatry, the denial of the faith, hatred and persecution of the truth, the sin against the Holy Ghost, with every kind of corruption in doctrine, perversion of the Scriptures, and strong delusion. Now, what are all these but the image of Satan, and the fruits of the serpent's seed sown in man?

6. Who could ever have supposed that such a depth of wickedness and depravity could be found in such a weak and helpless child; that so venomous a principle, so corrupt a heart, lay hid in a babe apparently so harmless? Who could possibly have believed this, had not man himself, by his sinful and abominable life, by the imaginations of his thoughts (being "only evil continually," and desperately bent on what is bad), of his own will brought it to light, and expressed, from his childhood, what was before concealed as in a seed? Gen. 6:5; 8:21.

7. Oh! most vile and most accursed root! from which springs the poisonous tree that is so fruitful in the production of every kind of plague. Oh, seed of the serpent, most hateful, most dreadful! from which an image at once so deformed and foul is generated; and which continually enlarges itself, as it is excited by outward temptations and by the scandals of the world. Full well might the blessed Jesus so solemnly and strictly forbid, that any, by bad example, should offend little children; knowing that the seed of the serpent lurks in them, as the deadly poison in the venomous worm, ready to break forth into open acts of sin, whenever an occasion presents itself.

8. Learn, then, O man! to know the fall of Adam, and the true nature of Original Sin. Learn, if thou art wise, to discern it in thyself. Examine it, not slightly and carelessly, but deeply, and as the importance of the matter deserves; for this infection is greater, this depravation deeper and more deadly, than can possibly be expressed by words, or even be conceived in idea. "Know thyself!" and deeply consider what thou art, O man! since the fall of thy first father; how thou, who wast in the image of God, art become the image of Satan, an epitome of all his wicked tendencies, and art conformed to Satan in all malice and un-

godliness. For as in the image of God all the divine virtues and properties are contained, so in the image of the Devil, which man, by turning himself from God, has contracted, all the vices and properties are to be found, and the very nature of the Devil himself. For, as man, before the fall, bore the image of the heavenly Adam, that is, was altogether heavenly, spiritual, and divine; so, since the first apostasy, he carries about with him the image of the earthly Adam, being inwardly earthly, carnal, and corrupt.

9. Lo! he is become as one of the beasts of the field. For what, O fallen man! is thy wrathfulness? and to whom does it more properly belong, to the lion, or to man? And do not thine envy and thy greediness betray in thee the nature of the dog and of the wolf? And with regard to thy uncleanness and gluttony, are not these evidences of a swinish nature? Didst thou, indeed, but rightly examine thine own breast, thou wouldst there discover a world of unclean and noxious beasts. Even in the tongue, that "little member," there may be found, according to St. James, a lake of pestilential and creeping things, a hold of every foul spirit, the cage of every filthy and hateful bird (Isaiah 13:21; Rev. 18:2), and, in a word, a "world of iniquity." James 3:6. Often, alas! do we make such progress in wickedness as to surpass in wrath and fury the beasts of prey; in ravenousness and violence, the wolf; in subtilty and cunning, the fox; in malice and virulence, the serpent; and in filthiness and obscenity, the swine. Hence it was, that our Lord termed Herod a fox, and the unholy, in general, dogs and swine; to whom that which is holy should not be given. Luke 13:32; Matt. 7:6.

10. Whosoever, therefore, fails to correct this corruption of nature, by being truly converted and *renewed* in Christ Jesus, but dies in the state which has been described, must retain, forever, this bestial and Satanical nature. He must be arrogant, haughty, proud, and devilish, throughout eternity. And when he shall have neglected the time of his purification here, he shall bear about with him the image of Satan in the blackness of darkness forever; as a testimony, that while he was in the world, he did not live in Christ, nor was renewed after the image of God. "For without are dogs and sorcerers, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie." Rev. 21:8; 22:15.

CHAPTER III.

SHOWING HOW MAN IS RENEWED IN CHRIST UNTO ETERNAL LIFE.

In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.—GAL. 6:15.

THE *New Birth* is a work of the Holy Ghost, by which man, of a sinner, is made righteous; and from being a child of damnation and wrath, is made a child of grace and salvation. This change is effected through faith, the word of God and the Sacraments; and by it, the heart, and all the powers and faculties of the soul (more particularly the understanding, will, and

affections), are renewed, enlightened, and sanctified in Christ Jesus, and are fashioned after his express likeness. The new birth comprehends two chief blessings, namely, justification, and sanctification, or the renewal of man. Tit. 3 : 5.

2. The birth of every real Christian is twofold. The first is "after the flesh," the second, "after the spirit;" the first is from beneath, the second from above; the first is earthly, but the second heavenly. The one is carnal, sinful, and accursed, as descending from the first Adam by the seed of the serpent, after the similitude and image of the Devil; and by this, the earthly and carnal nature is propagated. The other, on the contrary, is spiritual, holy, and blessed, as derived from the second Adam; after the likeness of the Son of God: and by this is propagated the heavenly and spiritual man, the seed and image of God.

3. There is therefore in the Christian a *twofold* line of descent; and, consequently, *two* men, as it were, exist in one and the same person. The fleshly lineage is derived from Adam, and the spiritual lineage from Christ, through faith: for as the old birth of Adam is in man by nature, even so must the new birth of Christ be in him by grace. This is the old and new man, the old and new birth, the old and new Adam, the earthly and heavenly image, the flesh and the Spirit, Adam and Christ in us, and also, the outward and inward man.

4. Let us now proceed to notice how we are regenerated by Christ. As the old birth is propagated carnally from Adam, so the new birth is spiritually propagated from Christ, through the word of God. This word is the seed of the new creature: for we are "born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever." 1 Peter 1 : 23. And, again, "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures." James 1 : 18. The word of God produces faith; and faith again apprehends the word of God, and in that word embraces Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost, by whose spiritual efficacy and virtue man is regenerated or born anew. In other words, regeneration is effected, in the first place, by the *Holy Ghost;* and this is what Christ means by being "born of the Spirit" (John 3 : 5); secondly, by *faith;* whence it is said,—"whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God" (1 John 5 : 1); and thirdly, by holy *Baptism;* according to that passage of Scripture, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." John 3 : 5.

5. In Adam, man has inherited the chief evils; as sin, divine wrath, death, Satan, hell, and damnation; but in Christ, he is restored to the possession of the chief blessings, as righteousness, grace, blessing, power, a heavenly life, and eternal salvation. From Adam, man inherits a carnal spirit, and is subjected to the rule and tyranny of the evil spirit; but from Christ, he obtains the Holy Spirit, with his gifts, together with his comforting guidance. From Adam, man has derived an arrogant, proud, and haughty spirit; but if he would be born again and renewed in his mind, he must receive from Christ, by faith, an humble, meek, and upright spirit. From Adam, man inherits an unbelieving, blasphemous, and most ungrateful spirit; and it is his duty to

obtain from Christ a believing spirit, that will prove faithful, acceptable, and well-pleasing to God. From Adam, a disobedient, violent and rash spirit is inherited; but from Christ, we imbibe, through faith, the spirit of obedience, gentleness, and modesty, and the spirit of meekness and moderation. From Adam, we, by nature, inherit a spirit of wrath, enmity, revenge, and murder; but from Christ, we, by faith, acquire the spirit of long-suffering, love, mercy, forgiveness, and universal goodness and benignity. From Adam, man, by *nature*, inherits a covetous heart, a churlish, merciless spirit, that seeks only to profit self, and grasp at that which is the right of another; but from Christ, is obtained, by *faith*, the spirit of mercy, compassion, generosity, and mildness. From Adam proceeds an unchaste, unclean, and intemperate spirit; but from Christ, a spirit of chastity, purity, and temperance, may be obtained. From Adam, there is communicated to man a spirit full of calumny and falsehood; while on the other hand, he acquires from Christ the spirit of truth, of constancy, and of integrity. Lastly, we receive from Adam a brutish and earthly spirit; and from Christ, a spirit from above, which is altogether heavenly and divine.

6. Hence, it behooved Christ to take upon himself our nature, and to be conceived and anointed by the Holy Ghost, in order that we might all receive of his fulness. It was requisite that "the Spirit of the Lord should rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord" (Isa. 11: 2), that so human nature might in him, and by him, be restored and renewed, and that we, in him, by him, and through him, might become new creatures. This is accomplished by receiving from Christ, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, for the spirit of folly; the spirit of counsel, for that of madness; the spirit of might, for that of cowardice and fear; the spirit of knowledge, instead of our natural blindness; and the spirit of the fear of the Lord, instead of the spirit of impiety and infidelity.

7. It is in this heavenly change that the new life and the new creation within us consist. For as, in Adam we are all spiritually dead, and incapable of performing any works, except those of death and darkness; so, in Christ, we must be made alive (1 Cor. 15 : 22) and do the works of light and life. As, by a *carnal generation*, we have inherited sin from Adam; so, by *faith*, we must inherit righteousness from Christ. As, by a fleshly descent from Adam, pride, covetousness, lust, and all kinds of impurity, are entailed upon us; so by the spirit of Christ, our nature ought to be renewed, and all pride, covetousness, lust, and envy, be mortified within us. And thus is it necessary that we should, from Christ, derive a new spirit, heart, and mind; even as we derived from Adam our sinful flesh.

8. With reference to this great work of regeneration, Christ is called "the everlasting Father" (Isa. 9 : 6), and we are renewed in him to life eternal, being here regenerated into his likeness, and made in him new creatures. And if our works ever prove acceptable in the sight of God, they must spring from this principle of the new birth; that is, from Christ, his Spirit, and an unfeigned faith.

9. Henceforth we must live in the new birth, and the new birth in us; we must be in Christ, and Christ in

us: we must live in the spirit of Christ, and the spirit of Christ in us. Gal. 2:20. This regeneration with its attendant fruits, is described by St. Paul, as the being "renewed in the spirit of our mind," "putting off the old man," and the being "transformed into the image of God." He likewise considers it as the being "renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created us," and "the renewing of the Holy Ghost." Eph. 4:23; 2 Cor. 3: 18; Col. 3: 10; Tit. 3: 5. It is termed by Ezekiel, "taking away the stony heart, and giving a heart of flesh." Ch. 11:19. Hence it appears how the regeneration of man proceeds from the incarnation of Jesus Christ. As man, by ambition, pride, and disobedience, turned himself from God; so his apostasy could not be expiated and removed, except by the extreme humility, lowliness, and obedience of the Son of God. And as Christ, when upon earth, was most humble in his conversation among men, so it is necessary, O man! that he should be the same in thee; that he should dwell in thy soul, and restore the image of God in thee.

10. And now, O man! contemplate the perfectly amiable, lowly, obedient, and patient Jesus, and learn of him; live as he lived, yea, live in him, and tread in his steps. For what was the cause of his living upon earth? It was that he might become thy example, thy mirror, and the rule of thy life. He, *he* only, is the rule of life, and the pattern which every Christian should strive to imitate. It is not the rule of any *man* whatsoever. There is but one example,—Christ; and him the Apostles have, with one consent, set before us for our imitation. And in the same manner are we called to view his passion, death, and resurrection: even that thou, O man! shouldest with him, die unto sin; and in him, with him, and by him, spiritually rise again, and walk in newness of life, "even as he also walked." Rom. 6:4.

11. Thus may we see, how our regeneration arises from the passion, death, and resurrection, of our gracious Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Hence, St. Peter saith, "God hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." 1 Pet. 1:3. And all the apostles will everywhere be found to lay the foundation of repentance and of a new life, in the passion of Christ. St. Peter, indeed, gives this express charge: "Pass the time of your sojourning here in fear; forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Pet. 1:17–19); in which we may observe, that the ransom paid for our redemption is urged as the motive to a holy conversation. The same apostle tells us, likewise, that "Christ his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness" (1 Peter 2: 24); and Jesus himself has said: "Thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name." Luke 24: 46, 47.

12. It is evident, therefore, that from the passion and death of Christ, proceed both the satisfaction made for our sins, and the renewing of our nature by faith; and that they both are necessary to the restoration of fallen man. The latter, as well as the former, is the blessed effect of Christ's passion,

which worketh our renewal and sanctification. 1 Cor. 1:30. Thus the new birth in us proceeds from Christ. And as a means to attain this end, holy Baptism has been instituted, wherein we are baptized into the death of Christ, in order that we might die with him unto sin by the power of his death, and rise again from sin by the power of his resurrection.

CHAPTER IV.

OF TRUE REPENTANCE, AND THE TRUE YOKE AND CROSS OF CHRIST.

They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.—GAL. 5:24.

REPENTANCE, or true conversion, is the work of the Holy Spirit, under the influence of which, man, through the *law*, acknowledges his sin, and the wrath of God provoked against it; and earnestly mourns over his offences; and then, understanding, through the *Gospel*, the grace of God, by faith in Christ Jesus, he obtains the remission of his sins. By this repentance, the mortification or crucifying of the flesh, and of all carnal lusts and pleasures, is carried on; together with the quickening of the spirit, or the resurrection of the new man in Christ. Under the exercise of repentance, therefore, the old Adam, with his corruptions, dies within us; and Christ lives in us, by faith (Gal. 2:20); for we must be aware that these two are inseparably connected. The resurrection of the spirit follows the mortification of the flesh; and the quickening of the new man, destroys and annihilates the old man; the ruin of the one, is the life and resurrection of the other. "Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day." 2 Cor. 4:16. We are, therefore, enjoined to "mortify our members which are upon the earth" (Col. 3:5); and to "reckon ourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." Rom. 6:11.

2. Let us, however, inquire why the flesh is thus to be mortified; and why the whole body of sin is at last to be destroyed. It has been remarked (Chap. II) that, by the fall of Adam, man became earthly, carnal, and devilish; without God, and without love: for being without God, he was also without love. Man was now turned from the love of God to the love of the world, and especially of himself; so that in every situation, and under all circumstances, he now studies, favors, flatters, counsels, and applauds himself; and provides only for his own interest, honor, and glory. All this is the consequence of Adam's fall; who, while meditating how he might erect himself, as it were, into *a God*, was involved, together with all his posterity, in the same awful sin and perdition. This depravation of human nature must of necessity be entirely removed; and this can be effected only by serious repentance; by godly sorrow; by a faith that apprehends the remission of sin; by the mortification of sensual pleasure; and by the crucifixion of pride and self-love. For true repentance consists not in putting away gross and open sins only; but

it requires that a man should enter his heart, and search into its inmost recesses. The secret parts, the windings and the turnings of iniquity are to be laid open; in order that the returning sinner may be thoroughly renewed, and, at length, be converted from the love of himself, to the love of God; from the love of the world, to a life of spirituality; and from a participation of earthly pomps and pleasures, to a participation, through faith, of the merits of Christ.

3. Hence it follows, that a man must deny himself (Luke 9:23); that is, he must mortify his own will, and suffer himself to be entirely led by the will of God. He must no longer love, seek, and esteem himself; but he must account himself to be the unworthiest and most miserable of all creatures. He must renounce all he has for the love of Christ; and trample on the world, its pomps, and its vanities. He must pass by his own wisdom and natural endowments, as though he beheld them not; he must confide in no creature, but in God alone; yea, he must "hate his own life" (Luke 14:26), that is, his carnal will and pleasures; his pride, covetousness, lust, wrath, and envy. He must not please, but rather displease himself; nor must he attribute anything to his own strength or ability. In a word, he must be crucified to the world (Gal. 6:14), to the lust of the eyes and the flesh, and to the pride of life. This, and this alone, is that true repentance and mortification of the flesh, without which no man can ever be a disciple of Jesus Christ. This only is conversion from self, the world, and the devil, unto God (Acts 26:18); without which no one can receive remission of sins, nor be saved.

4. This is the true cross and yoke of Christ; that of which the Saviour spoke when he said, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart." Matt. 11:29. As if he had said, "Thy self-love and ambition must be removed by earnest and inward humility, of which thou hast an example in me; and by the example of my meekness, must thy wrath and desire of revenge be subdued." This, to the new man, is an easy yoke and a light burden; though, to the flesh, it may seem to be a most bitter and afflictive cross. This is to crucify our own flesh, with the affections and lusts. Gal. 5:24.

5. They, therefore, who are acquainted with no other cross than the tribulations and afflictions of this life, greatly err; being ignorant of that true cross, which we ought to bear after our Lord daily; namely, inward repentance, and the mortification of the flesh; submitting to our enemies with great patience; and overcoming the malice of slanderers by humility and mildness, after the pattern which the Lamb of God has left us. For it becomes us to follow the example of Christ, who renounced all worldly splendor and glory, and everything that is commonly esteemed great and noble.

6. This yoke of Christ is the real cross, which when a man bears he truly dies to the world. It is not to retire into monasteries and cloisters, nor to adopt a set of rules and orders for the regulation of life; for while the heart remains disordered, and the love corrupt; while the man is puffed up with spiritual pride, and a pharisaical contempt of others; while he is devoted to lust, envy, hypocrisy, secret hatred and malice; he does not die to the world, but altogether lives to it. This is not the Christian yoke nor is

it the cross of Christ; for these consist in mortifying the flesh, with its sinful propensities; in turning away from the world to God; in an inward and constant secret sorrow for our sins; in a daily dying to the world, and living to Christ by faith; in following his steps with sincere lowliness and humility; and in confiding only in the grace of God in Christ Jesus.

7. To this unfeigned repentance, this true and inward conversion from the world unto God, hath our blessed Lord called us. The imputation of his righteousness and obedience, together with the remission of all our sins, apprehended by faith, is promised to it alone. If we are destitute of repentance, Christ profiteth us nothing; that is, we cannot then become partakers of his grace and favor, nor of the efficacy of his merits; because these can be applied only by a contrite, penitent, lowly, and believing heart. And truly this is the fruit of the passion of Christ in us, that we die to sin by a sincere repentance; as the fruit of his resurrection is, that Christ may live in us, and we in him.

8. All this is necessary to render man that *new creature* in Christ Jesus, without which nothing availeth in the sight of God. 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15.

9. Hence, therefore, let us be instructed in the nature of true repentance; lest we be led away into that common error, that the mere relinquishment of some gross enormity, as theft, fornication, profaneness, blasphemy, is the genuine and only repentance. It is certain, that this is a kind of *external* repentance; but it is no less so, that all the Scriptures alike inculcate the necessity of an *inward* repentance, which takes possession of the whole soul. A man under the influence of this repentance, not only supports a fair conversation in the world, but he also denies and hates himself. Renouncing the world and all he calls his own, and crucifying the flesh, he commits himself by faith to God alone; and offers up to him a broken and contrite heart, as the sacrifice most acceptable in his sight. This character of inward repentance is eminently set forth in the Psalms of David, and particularly in those termed Penitential.*

10. This is, therefore, the only true repentance, when the heart of the sinner is inwardly torn with grief, and weighed down by heaviness; and when, on the other hand, it is healed by faith and the remission of sin; quickened by the infusion of divine joy, provoked to good works, and thoroughly transformed and changed. Such a frame of mind cannot fail to be attended also with an *external* reformation of life and manners.

11. But, on the other hand, though a man be very serious in the performance of bodily penances, and, from a dread of punishment, abstain from the commission of notorious sins; yet if he continue unreformed and unregenerate in his heart, and enter not upon that new and inward life which it has been our object to describe, he will prove but a *castaway* (1 Cor. 9:27) at last, notwithstanding the whole train of his external acts. It will avail him nothing to cry, "Lord, Lord!" He will hear the tremendous declaration, "I never knew you!" For most certain it is, that not every one that saith, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but those only who do the will of their Heavenly Father.

* [These are Psalms, 6; 32; 38; 51; 102; 130; 143.]

Matt. 7 : 21–23. And under this awful sentence of divine majesty, all men are comprised, of what rank or order soever, who do not truly and inwardly repent, and who are not new creatures in Christ, for "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." Rom. 8 : 9.

CHAPTER V.

WHEREIN DOES TRUE FAITH CONSIST?

Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God.—1 John 5 : 1.

FAITH is a sincere confidence, and a firm persuasion of the grace of God promised to us in Christ Jesus, for the remission of sin and eternal life; and it is enkindled in the heart, by the word of God and the Holy Spirit. Through this faith we obtain the forgiveness of our sins, without any merits of our own, of mere grace (Eph. 2 : 8), and for the sake of the merits of Christ alone; that so, our faith might rest on a firm and solid foundation, and remain unmoved by perplexity and doubts. This forgiveness of sin constitutes our justification before God, which is true, solid, and eternal; for this righteousness is purchased neither by men nor angels, but by the obedience, merit, and the blood of the Son of God himself. We appropriate and apply it to ourselves by faith; and hence the imperfections which still adhere to us cannot condemn us, since, for the sake of Christ, who now lives and works within us, they are covered with a veil of grace. Ps. 32 : 1.

2. By this cordial and unshaken faith, man wholly dedicates his heart to the Almighty, in whom alone he seeks his rest. To him only is he now united, and with him alone he enters into delightful fellowship. He partakes of all things that are of God and of Christ, and is made one spirit with the Lord. From him he receives divine power and strength; together with a new life, attended with new joys, new pleasures, new consolations, in which are found peace, inward ease, and durable satisfaction, together with righteousness and holiness. And thus man is born anew of God by faith. For wherever there is true faith, *there* Christ is verily present with all his righteousness, holiness, and remission of sin; with all his merits, justification, grace, adoption, and inheritance of eternal life. This is the new birth and the new creature, springing from faith in Christ. Hence, the apostle calls faith a *substance* (Heb. 11 : 1); understanding by it, a sure, solid, and unshaken confidence in "things hoped for," and a lively conviction of "things not seen." For the consolation conveyed by a vital faith is so powerful, as to convince the heart of the divine truth by inward experience, and by the tasting of the heavenly goodness in the soul, and of the peace of God, that passes all understanding; yea, it is so mighty as to enable its possessors to die with a joyful heart. In this consist that strength of the spirit, that might of the inner man, that vigor of faith, that holy boldness; this is that confidence toward God, that

exceeding and abounding assurance, which are so copiously set forth by the holy apostles. 2 Tim. 2 : 1; Eph. 3 : 12, 16; Phil. 1 : 14; 1 John 3 : 21; 1 Thess. 1 : 5; 2 : 2.

3. That for which a man will dare to die, must be rooted in the soul, and, by the operation of the Spirit of God, afford an inward assurance. It must be a cordial, powerful, and eternal comfort, infusing heavenly and supernatural strength into the soul, by which the fear of death and the love of the world may both be subdued. Now all this begets so solid a trust in Christ, and so close a union with him, as neither death nor life is able to dissolve. Rom. 8 : 38; 2 Tim. 1 : 12. Hence St. John says: "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world." 1 John 5 : 4.

4. *To be born of God* is in truth no vain figure, no empty name; it must necessarily be a lively and powerful change, worthy of the majesty of an omnipotent God. To believe that the living God could beget a dead offspring, that lifeless members and useless organs could proceed from him, were very wickedness. It is sure and undoubted that God, being a *living* God, cannot but beget a *living* man, even the new man in Christ Jesus. And our faith is the victory which overcomes the world. 1 John 5 : 4. Who can question whether it be endued with strength sufficient for the conquest? It is, it *must be* a lively, vigorous, potent, divine, and victorious principle; but all its power is derived from him who is embraced by it, even Christ. By means of faith, we return into God again, and become *one* with him; and from Adam, as from an accursed vine, we are transplanted into Christ, the living and blessed vine. John 15 : 4. In Christ, we possess everything that is good, and in him, are justified.

5. As a scion, when grafted on a good tree, grows, flourishes, and bears fruit, but, without it, withers away; so man, when out of Christ, is as an accursed vine, whose grapes are bitterness and gall; and all his works are sin. Deut. 32 : 32, 33; Rom. 14 : 23. But when he is *in* Christ, he is righteous and blessed; because "*he* was made to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." 2 Cor. 5 : 21.

6. It is most evident, from what has been advanced, that works cannot possibly justify a sinner; because, before we can perform any good work, we must be engrafted into Christ by faith: and it is equally clear, that justification is entirely the gift of God, freely conferred on man and preceding all human merit. How shall a dead man see, hear, stand, walk, or do any good thing, unless he be first raised from the dead, and endued with a new principle of life? So neither canst thou, O man, who art dead in sins, do any work that is good or acceptable, unless thou be first raised unto life by Jesus Christ. Thus righteousness proceeds only from faith in Christ. Faith is like a new-born babe, weak and naked, poor and destitute, and laid before the eyes of the Saviour; from whom, as from its author, it receives righteousness and sanctification, godliness, grace and the Holy Ghost.

7. The naked child is thus clothed with the mercy of God. He lifts up his hands, receives all from God, and is made a partaker of grace and health, truth and holiness. It is, therefore, this receiving of Christ in the heart, that makes a man holy and happy.

8. Righteousness proceeds therefore solely from faith, and not from works. Indeed, faith receives the whole Christ, and accepts him, together with all that he has. Then sin and death, the devil and hell, must flee, and are unable any longer to preserve their ground. Nay, so effectually and so powerfully do the merits of Christ justify the sinner, that if the sins of the whole world were charged on one man, they would not avail to condemn him, if he believed in Christ.

9. Inasmuch, therefore, as Christ lives and dwells in thy heart by faith (Eph. 3:17), never, O believer! indulge the thought, that his indwelling in thee, is a dead work unattended with any vital power. Rather believe that it is a quickening principle, a mighty work, and an effectual transforming of thy mind. Faith effects two things: it first *engrafts* thee into Christ, and gives him freely to thee, with all that he has; and then, it *renews* thee in Christ, that thou mayest grow, flourish, and live in him. The wild graft is introduced into the stock, for no other end than that it may flourish and bear fruit. As by the apostasy of Adam and the temptation of the devil, the seed of the serpent was sown in man, growing up into a tree and bearing the fruits of death; even so by the divine word and the Holy Spirit, is faith sown in man, as the seed of God. See Chap. II. In this seed all divine virtues and properties are, in a most wonderful manner, comprehended; which gradually expand themselves from day to day. This tree is adorned with a profusion of heavenly fruit; as love, patience, humility, meekness, peace, chastity, righteousness. And thus the whole kingdom of God descends into man. For true and saving faith renews the whole man, purifies the heart, sanctifies the soul, and delivers from the love of the world. It unites with God; it hungers and thirsts after righteousness; it works love; and it brings peace, joy, patience, and comfort in adversity: it overcomes the world; it makes us sons of God, and heirs of the treasures of heaven; and it constitutes us joint-heirs with the Lord Jesus Christ. But if any one should not be conscious of that joyfulness which faith imparts and does not experience its consoling influences, let him not, on that account, despair; but rather let him trust in the grace which is promised in Christ: for this promise ever remains sure, immovable, and everlasting. And though, through the infirmities incident to human nature, he should stumble and fall; yet, if the sinner return by unfeigned repentance, and more cautiously watch against the sin which so easily besets him, the grace of God will not be withdrawn. For Christ is and will ever be *Christ* and a Saviour, whether the faith that embraces him be strong or weak. A weak faith has an equal share in Christ with a strong faith, for faith, whether it be weak or strong, possesses the whole Christ. The grace which is promised is common to all Christians, and is eternal, and on this grace faith must rely, whether it be weak or strong. The Lord will revisit thy soul in his own time, with a sense of his gracious favor, and of his abundant consolations, although, at the present, he may think fit to put a veil over it in thy heart. Ps. 37:23, 24; 77:7–10. Upon this subject, see Book II.

CHAPTER VI.

SHOWING HOW THE VITAL POWER OF THE WORD OF GOD SHOULD BE MANIFESTED IN MAN THROUGH FAITH.

Behold, the kingdom of God is within you.—JOHN 17 : 21.

INASMUCH as man's whole welfare depends on his regeneration and renewal, it was the will of God that all those changes which ought to take place in man *spiritually* and by faith, should be also *outwardly* set forth in the words of Holy Scripture. Since the Word is the seed of God (Luke 8 : 11) within us, it is necessary that it should also spring up and spiritually bear fruit. That must be accomplished *in us* by faith, which is declared *without us* in the letter of Scripture; and if this effect be not produced, then the Word is evidently to us but a dead seed, destitute of life and energy. Hence, we ought in faith and in spirit to learn by our own happy experience the truth of that which the Scriptures have outwardly declared.

2. When God revealed his will in his Word, he never designed that the latter should be a dead letter, but that it should grow up in us to a new and inward man; otherwise the Word is of no benefit to us. These truths may be explained more clearly by a reference to some example, as that of Cain and Abel. The nature, manners, and actions of these two persons, as they are recorded in Scripture, clearly explain the motions and workings of the old and the new man in the breast of the believer. Cain perpetually endeavors to oppress and destroy Abel. What else is this but the daily strife of the flesh and spirit, and the enmity subsisting between the serpent and the seed of the woman? With Abraham, the Christian is required to quit his own country, leaving all that he possesses, even life itself, in order that he may walk before God with a perfect heart, obtain the victory, and enter into the land of promise and kingdom of heaven. Such is the meaning of the Lord's words: "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple;" that is, he must renounce all these rather than renounce Christ. Luke 14 : 26. With Lot, he must depart from Sodom and Gomorrah, forsaking the wicked course of the world; not looking back with Lot's wife, but obeying Christ's injunction (Luke 17 : 32), in order that his deliverance may be completed. Hither are all the wars and battles of Israel against the heathen and infidel nations to be referred; for what is represented under this history but the continual strife between the flesh and the spirit? Whatsoever is recorded of the Mosaical priesthood, the tabernacle, the ark of the covenant, or the mercy-seat, with the sacrifices, etc.,—all has relation to the Christian believer. For unto him it appertains to pray in spirit and in truth; to burn spiritual incense; and to slay the sin-offering by presenting his body, through mortification, as a reasonable service and sacrifice, so that Christ may truly dwell in him by faith.

3. And if we advert to the New Testament itself, what is this but an outward expression of those truths, which are to be inwardly fulfilled by faith, in the experience of the believer? If I become a new creature in Christ, it is incumbent on me to live and walk in him; in him and with him, to flee into exile, and to be a stranger upon the earth. The virtues that resided in him I ought to practise; humility, contempt of the world, meekness, and patience; and I am bound to be fervent in acts of benignity, charity, and loving kindness. In and with Christ I should exercise mercy, and pardon and love my enemies, and, with him, do the Father's will. I must be tempted by Satan with him; and, with him, I must obtain the victory. I am to be derided, despised and vilified for the sake of the truth that is in me; and, if called to it, I ought to die for and with him, after the example of the saints, and in testimony that he, by faith, hath lived in me, and I in him.

4. This is to be conformed to the image of Christ; this is to be born with and in Christ; to put on Christ; to grow up and be strong in Christ; to live with Christ in banishment; to be baptized with his baptism; to be scoffed and crucified with him; to die with him; to be buried with him; to rise with him from the dead; and to reign with him to all eternity.

5. If ever thou desirest to live in a constant union and conformity with thy Head and Saviour, thou art in this manner to die daily with him, and to crucify the flesh. Rom. 6 : 5, 6. Should this divine harmony not exist, and another way be devised more consonant to thy fancy, then Christ will not be *within* but *without* thee; far from thy faith, thy heart, and thy spirit; and, in that case, he will profit thee nothing. But if thou permit him to dwell in thy heart by faith, he will be thy strength, thy comfort, and thy salvation.

6. All this, O man! doth faith in Christ effect within the heart; and thus the Word of God becomes a living Word, and, as it were, a living witness in us of all those things which are externally declared in the Scriptures. Hence, faith is termed by the apostle a substance and an evidence, Heb. 11 : 1.

7. It is therefore evident, that all the sermons, discourses, and epistles, contained in the Word of God, whether proceeding from Christ, or the prophets, or the apostles; and, in a word, that all the Scriptures, in general, as it regards their complete fulfilment, belong to man, and to every man individually. Not only do the plain doctrines appertain to us; but all the parables and miracles with which the history of Christ abounds, have their final reference to man.

8. The purpose for which they were written was, that they might be spiritually fulfilled in our own experience. When, therefore, I read that Christ healed others, I promise myself the same relief; for we live in unity one with another, Christ with me, and I with Christ. When I read further, how he cured the blind, I am encouraged to believe that he will restore me to the enjoyment of spiritual sight, who am blind by nature: and so, with regard to all his other miracles. Only own thyself to be blind, lame, deaf, or leprous; to be dead in trespasses and sins; and then, he will surely heal thy maladies, and quicken that which is dead, that so thou mayest have part in the first resurrection.

9. The substance of all that has been advanced is this: the Holy Scripture bears *outward* testimony to those things, which are to be *inwardly* fulfilled in man, by faith. It points out that image externally, which, by faith, is to be formed within him. It describes the kingdom of God in the *letter*, which is to be established in the heart, by faith, after the *spirit*. It exhibits Christ outwardly, who is, by faith, to live within me; and it testifies of the new birth and of the new creature, which I must experience in myself. All this I am to be made by faith, or the Scripture will profit me nothing.

CHAPTER VII.

THE LAW OF GOD, WRITTEN IN THE HEARTS OF ALL MEN, CONVINCES THEM THAT ON THE DAY OF JUDGMENT THEY WILL BE WITHOUT EXCUSE.

When the Gentiles . . . do the things contained in the law . . . they shew the work of the law written in their hearts.—ROM. 2:14, 15.

WHEN God created man in his own image, in righteousness and holiness, and endowed him with exalted virtues and gifts, he impressed three qualities on the human conscience so deeply, that they can never be effaced: First, the natural testimony that there is a God. Secondly, a testimony that a day of Judgment will come. Rom. 2:15. Thirdly, the law of nature, or natural righteousness, by which man is enabled to distinguish between honor and shame, and to experience joy and sorrow.

2. For no nation has ever been discovered so wild and barbarous, as to deny that a God exists, inasmuch as nature furnishes internal and external evidence of this fact. Indeed, men have not only acknowledged the *being* of a God, of which they were assured by their consciences; but they have also been affected with a sense of his *justice*, as an avenger of evil, and a rewarder of good; and this persuasion arose from the consciousness, that, on some occasions, they were harassed with fearful apprehensions; while, on others, they felt a certain measure of peace and joy. By this knowledge, they even proceeded farther, and discovered the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, as appears from Plato, who most amply discussed this subject. And, lastly, they gathered from this inward law, that God was the author and source of all that was *good* in nature, and therefore ought to be worshipped by an assiduous attention to virtue, and with a pure heart. Hence, they defined virtue to be man's chief good; and schools of moral virtue were accordingly instituted by Socrates, and by other heathen philosophers. This may be sufficient to convince us, that God, even since the fall, has allowed a spark of natural light to remain in men, in order that they might be admonished of their heavenly origin, and be assured, that

it was only by following these footsteps of divinity, that they could be restored to their former perfection. Some of the heathens themselves, have not been unacquainted with this truth; among whom is Aratus, the poet, quoted by St. Paul, who declares that "we are God's offspring." Acts 17 : 28.

3. The Gentiles, however, stifling the testimony of conscience, contemned the light of nature, and "the work of the law written in their hearts" (Rom. 2 : 15); so that it cannot but be their own fault, that they are condemned and lost; and they are, as St. Paul argues, left altogether without excuse. Rom. 1 : 19, 20. And as the Gentiles knew, by nature, the justice of God, and that such as did evil were worthy of death; and yet not only committed evil but had pleasure in it; it follows, that they thereby condemned themselves, whilst "their thoughts accusing or excusing one another," convinced them of the certainty of the day of judgment. Rom. 1 : 32; 2 : 15. But if the *Gentiles* shall be "inexcusable," because, though endued with the natural knowledge of God, they sought him not, as was their duty; what shall *they* plead in their own behalf, to whom God hath given his Holy Word, and whom he hath so earnestly invited to repentance, by Jesus Christ his beloved Son; in order that, forsaking the corruptions of the world, they might, by faith, apprehend the merits of the Saviour, and obtain eternal life and salvation?

4. Therefore, every false Christian shall, in the day of judgment, be condemned by two mighty witnesses: by his own conscience or the law of nature, and likewise by the revealed Word of God, which will then judge him. In that day, "it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom," than for such false pretenders to religion. Matt. 11 : 24.

5. Their anguish and torment shall be without end; since God has made the soul immortal and planted the conscience in it, to be both a witness and a judge. The conscience can never throw off the recollection of God, and yet cannot of itself approach him; which must be attended with unutterable pain to the soul, and expose it to the worm that dieth not, and to the fire that cannot be quenched. And the more the wicked have, through impenitence of heart, treasured up to themselves "wrath against the day of wrath" (Rom. 2 : 5), the more severe will this inward and eternal suffering be. For as God, in the exercise of his righteous judgment, gave up the Gentiles to a reprobate mind, because they sinned against their own consciences, and "the work of the law written in their hearts;" so that they became blind in their understandings, and rushed into every kind of filthy and abominable pollution; thus drawing down upon themselves the wrath of God, denounced against all crimes that are committed against the light of knowledge: so the same doom (yea, and a far heavier one) will be inflicted upon those who rest in the mere profession of the Christian faith, and deny the life and the power of godliness. The reason of this is obvious: such persons have contemned the inward as well as the outward word and testimony of God, and have not only persevered in a state of impenitence, but have resisted the Divine Spirit, and blasphemed Him who favored them with the light of his Gospel. On this account, God gives them up to a reprobate mind, so that they become worse than heathens and infidels. He sends

them "strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." 2 Thess. 2:11, 12.

6. This is the true reason why vices of so detestable a nature universally abound among Christians; many of which were not so much as known among the Pagan nations. What satanical pride, what insatiable covetousness, what unheard-of intemperance, what bestial lust; in a word, what inhuman wickedness, is not practised by those who call themselves Christians! And whence does all this arise, but from that blindness and hardness of heart, which they have contracted by confirmed habits of iniquity. When those who are called Christians disdain to imitate the meek and lowly Jesus in their manners and their conversation; when they are scandalized at him, and consider it disgraceful to look to him whom God has appointed to be the light of the world, and our great example (John 8:12); then the righteous God gives them up to follow Satan; to take upon them the life of the devil, his abominable impiety, wickedness, and lies; that they may execute with him all the works of darkness, inasmuch as they refuse to walk in the light. For thus saith the Lord, "Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you." John 12:35.

7. Finally, if God gave up the heathen to so terrible a blindness and so reprobate a mind; and this because they proved disobedient to the glimmering light of nature; or, as St. Paul expresses it, "because they did not like to retain God in their knowledge," in order to be preserved by him (Rom. 1:28); how much more shall those be banished from life and salvation, to whom the truth of God has come not only by natural light, but by means of his revealed word, and the new covenant, and who yet haughtily despise these special tenders of divine mercy! Of which new covenant, God thus speaks: "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." Jer. 31:33, 34; John 6:45.

8. And here, let us also attend to that which the Apostle says, concerning those who offend wilfully. "If," says he, "we sin wilfully, after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law," continues the Apostle, "died without mercy under two or three witnesses; of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Heb. 10:26–31. These words, however, are not pronounced in reference to those who fall through natural infirmity, but against them who sin wilfully and against knowledge, and who persevere to the end in a state of impenitence.

CHAPTER VIII.

NO ONE CAN FIND COMFORT IN CHRIST AND HIS MERITS, WHO DOES NOT TRULY REPENT.

No unclean person was permitted to eat of the passover.—Exod. 12 : 48.

IT was the declaration of the Lord Jesus Christ, "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Matt. 9 : 12, 13. By this declaration the Lord teaches us, that he indeed calls sinners, but that he calls them to *repentance;* whence it is evident, that no man can come to Christ without true repentance and conversion from sin, and without a true faith.

2. Now repentance consists in dying unto sin through true sorrow for our sins, and in obtaining the remission of sins through faith and living unto righteousness in Christ. There is no real repentance unless a genuine godly sorrow is first experienced, by which the heart is broken and the flesh crucified. Hence it is termed "repentance from dead works" (Heb. 6 : 1); or the renunciation of such works as issue in death. To abstain from dead works is, therefore, one of the principal parts of true repentance.

3. If we be not the subjects of this repentance, the merit of Christ profits us nothing; nor can we lay the smallest claim to the benefits which thence accrue; for Christ proffers his aid, as the physician of souls, and his blood, as the only effectual medicine for our spiritual maladies.

4. But as not even the most precious remedy can effect a cure of a disorder unless the patient refrain from things that are hurtful in their tendency, and that resist the operation of the medicine, so the blood and death of Christ will be of no avail to him who does not fully resolve to forsake his sins, and to live up to the requirements of the gospel; for St. Paul says: "They who do such things (the works of the flesh), shall not inherit the kingdom of God," and, of course, have not any part in the Lord Jesus Christ. Gal. 5 : 21.

5. Again, if Christ, by his most precious blood, is to become our medicine, it cannot be doubted that we must be in a diseased state, and that we must, for ourselves, *feel* that we are so. The whole need not a physician, but the sick only (Matt. 9 : 12); and none is spiritually sick (at least so as to be conscious of it) who does not experience unfeigned contrition for the sins which he has committed, and who has not a sense of the indignation of God which is excited against them. He is no proper patient for the physician of souls who avoids not worldly lusts and vanities, honors and riches; but goes on in a state of spiritual unconcern, without any regard to his past life or his final salvation. Upon a man of this character, no cure can possibly be wrought. He does not see his distemper, and therefore needs no physician. In short, Christ profits him nothing, and his merits leave no saving effect upon his soul.

6. Remember, therefore, O man! that Christ is come to call *sinners to repentance;* and that it is only such as

are broken in heart and contrite in spirit; only such as fervently desire and thirst after this righteousness that are in a condition to receive the saving influence of the blood, death, and merits of the Lord Jesus.

7. Happy is he who feels in his heart, and still more happy he who proves obedient to this holy calling, that is, the "godly sorrow for sin, which worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of," and which is the work of the Holy Spirit himself. It arises, first, from the *law*, and from serious meditation on the *passion* of Christ, which abounds with loud invitations to unfeigned repentance. It exhibits, as in a mirror, both the wrath of God against sin, and also his infinite grace in saving the sinner. To make an atonement for our sins, Jesus shed his blood; and love induced him to die for us while we were yet sinners. Rom. 5 : 8. Here the divine justice and clemency combine for the salvation of souls.

8. How is it possible that a man who believes in Christ, should continue in sins which the Lord expiated at no less a price than his own most precious blood? When, therefore, O man! thou art tempted to pride and ambition, reflect upon the contempt and humiliation to which Jesus submitted in order to atone for thy pride and thy ambition. When thou art covetous after this world, think of the poverty which he underwent that he might make satisfaction for thy cupidity; and, surely, this will extinguish in thee the love of money and of worldly estates. What anguish and agony did Christ suffer on account of thy lusts and sinful pleasures; and art thou yet in pursuit of these pleasures that will leave behind them a mortal sting? Alas! how great must be the corruption of our nature when we can delight in things for which our Redeemer and Lord was sorrowful even unto death! Christ died to expiate thy wrath, hatred, and enmity; to atone for thy bitterness and rancor, for thy love of revenge, and the implacableness of thy spirit. This he effected by his extreme mildness and patience, mercy and long-suffering. And wilt thou be angry on every trifling occasion, and esteem revenge to be sweet, when, to atone for it, thy Redeemer drank to the very dregs the cup of bitterness and affliction?

9. Truly as many as assume to themselves the name of Christians, and yet do not forsake the pleasures of sin, "crucify Christ to themselves *afresh*, and put him to an open shame" (Heb. 6 : 6); and it is, therefore, utterly impossible that they should partake of that merit which they tread under foot. They pollute the blood of the everlasting covenant, and do not believe that their sins are expiated by it. They do "despite unto the Spirit of grace;" they despise and resist him; and, by their ungodly lives, scorn and contemn the grace of God offered in Christ Jesus. Heb. 10 : 29. Hence, the blood of the Saviour, which was shed for their sakes, cries aloud for vengeance against them; and this it does by the righteous judgment of God, which they thus draw down upon themselves, — a consideration that ought to strike a terror into every one that names the name of Christ. Indeed, "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb. 10 : 31); for he is a *living* God, and not a lifeless idol, incapable of punishing so scornful a contempt of his grace and mercy.

10. With this divine wrath and vengeance, even their own consciences

threaten them, as inevitably following those who (though they know that it was to atone for sin that the Son of God died so ignominious a death) are yet not careful to put away their sins.

11. It was for this reason that, soon after the death of Christ, repentance was preached over all the world; namely, both because he died "for the sins of the whole world" (1 John 2 : 2); and because *in all places* of the world men should repent. Acts 17 : 30. Thus it is said, "God now commandeth all men *every where* to repent," and to receive with a contrite, penitent, and believing heart the sovereign medicine purchased by the death of Christ, in order that the grace of God be not frustrated, but answer the end designed.

12. Remission of sins immediately follows true repentance; but how shall a man have his sins remitted when he does not repent of them, nay, when he still rejoices in them? Nothing surely could be more preposterous than to expect that sins should be pardoned which a man has no design to renounce; and nothing can be more absurd than to seek consolation in the sufferings of Christ, and yet continue in the mire of sin which caused Christ's death.

13. But certain and obvious as these truths are in themselves, there are many that call themselves Christians who never repented, and who yet will presume to lay claim to a share in the merits of Christ, and in the remission of sins which he has purchased. They have not ceased to indulge their accustomed wrath, covetousness, pride, malice, envy, hypocrisy, and unrighteousness, but have rather become more and more enslaved by them; and yet, alas! they expect forgiveness of sin, and presumptuously apply to themselves the merits of Christ as a defence against the impending judgment of Almighty God. And though this is one of the grossest and most palpable of errors, yet they do not hesitate to bestow upon it the specious name of *faith*, by which they hope for salvation. These are they that flatter themselves to their own destruction; fondly supposing that they are true Christians because they have a speculative knowledge of the Gospel, and because they believe that Jesus died for their sins. This, alas! is not *faith*, but *fancy;* and thou art an unhappy, and most awfully infatuated *false Christian*, if thou canst suffer thyself to be deluded in this manner! Never did the Word of God teach such a doctrine; but the unvarying language of the inspired writers is: "If thou earnestly desirest the pardon of thy sins, *repent* of them, and firmly resolve to give up the practice of them; and thus, grieving from thy heart that thou hast so greatly offended God, and determining to lead a new life, believe on Jesus Christ, the great propitiation for the sins of the whole world."

14. But how should that man feel sorrow for his sins, who will not be induced to quit them? and how should he quit them, while he remains unconcerned about committing them? Christ, and all his apostles and prophets, unite in teaching thee, O man! that thou must die to the world and to thy sins; die to thy pride, thy covetousness, thy lust, and thy wrath; and that thou must return to the Lord with all thy heart, and implore his gracious pardon. And this being sincerely done, thou art absolved, and thy sins are forgiven. *Then*, the heavenly physician looks upon thee graciously; for he is come to revive those

that are of a contrite spirit, and to bind up the broken in heart. Ps. 147: 3. But if thou seekest for some other way to be saved, than that which is here pointed out, then Christ will profit thee nothing, and the boasting of thy faith is altogether vain. For *true* faith renews him who possesses it; it mortifies sin, and raises the soul, with Christ, into a new life; for such a man lives, by faith in Christ, in his love, his humility, his meekness, and his patience. It is thus, O man! that Jesus becomes unto thee the way of life, and thus thou becomest in him a "new creature." But if thou continuest to commit thy favorite sins, and remainest unwilling to die to the corrupt bent of "the old man" (Rom. 6 : 6; Eph. 4 : 22), how wilt thou pretend to be a new creature? How is it possible for thee to belong to Christ, when thou dost not "crucify the flesh, with its affections and lusts?" Gal. 5 : 24.

15. Even if thou shouldst listen to ten sermons in one day, shouldst confess thy sins every month, and receive the Lord's Supper, thou wouldst derive no benefit from such exercises, nor obtain the remission of sins; the reason is, that thou hast not a penitent, contrite, and believing heart, which can be reached by the healing influences of the medicine. The Word of God and the Sacraments are, indeed, salutary remedies; but they are such to those alone who unfeignedly repent and believe. What would it profit, to anoint a stone with costly ointment? What harvest shalt thou reap, if thou sowest among briers and thorns? First pull up the thorns and thistles that choke the good seed, and, then, thou mayest reasonably expect the precious fruit. Luke 8: 7. And, in fine, Christ will never profit thee at all, if thou continuest to love sin rather than Him. The *birth* of the Saviour is of no advantage to a man whose aim it is not to be *born* with him; nor shall his *death* avail for any, who are not disposed to *die* to sin, and to mortify the deeds of the flesh. Rom. 6 : 11. So, the *resurrection* of Christ will benefit none who will not *rise* from sin, and live unto righteousness; nor will his *ascension* prove a blessing to any who refuse to *ascend* with him, and to have their conversation in heaven.

16. But when, on the contrary, a man, like the Prodigal Son, truly returns to his offended father, deploring, hating, and forsaking his sins; when he earnestly seeks forgiveness, and, with the eye of faith, beholds Christ and his bleeding wounds, as the Israelites beheld the serpent of brass, and lived (Numb. 21 : 9); when, at last, under a real sense of guilt, he cries out with the penitent publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner" (Luke 18: 13); then, *then*, the pardon is granted, the absolution is sealed, however great and many the sins be which he has committed against his God.

17. Such is the efficacy of the redemption which the blood of Christ has effected, and of so extensive a nature is his merit, that it is fully imputed, through faith, to every penitent soul. Thus is brought to pass the scripture, "He giveth repentance and forgiveness of sins" (Acts 5 : 31); that is, he pardons the repentant sinner freely and wholly, for Christ's sake. For it is a pleasure with God to exercise mercy, and to forgive a sinner. "My bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord." Jer. 31: 20; Hosea 11: 8. Then it is, that the death of Christ is rendered truly effectual; and then it is, that the angels of God rejoice in

heaven (Luke 15: 7), because the blood of Christ was not shed in vain for the poor sinner for whom He had died. 1 Cor. 8: 11.

CHAPTER IX.

THE UNCHRISTIAN WALK OF MANY PERSONS IN OUR DAY, IS A CAUSE OF THE REJECTION OF CHRIST AND OF THE TRUE FAITH.

Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.—2 Tim. 3 : 5.

EVERY one calls himself by the Christian name, even though he do not perform the least part of what he thereby professes; and, by this means, the Saviour is denied, contemned, blasphemed, scourged, crucified, and, as it were, cast out of the sight of men, as dead. The Apostle expressly declares, that some persons "crucify the Son of God afresh." Heb. 6 : 6.

2. Would to God that Christ were not, even in *our* days, crucified again and again among those who call themselves after his name, and honor him with their lips; and yet, by their antichristian lives and actions, utterly reject and deny him. His most holy, humble, and exemplary life is, at this day, to be found among but few; and wherever there is not the *life* of Christ, *there* Christ is not himself, however loudly the faith and the doctrine may be commended. For the Christian faith without a Christian life is a tree without fruit. True faith works by love (Gal. 5 : 6); and wherever it is found, there Christ dwells, with all his divine graces and virtues. Eph. 3 : 17.

3. But when these are not expressed in the lives of those who profess his doctrine, there Christ himself is rooted up and denied; for it is only where true faith exists that Christ dwells.

4. Now Christ hath said, "Whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father and the angels." Matt. 10 : 33; Luke 12 : 9. This denial of Christ is not only made in words (as by those who renounce Christ and Christianity), but it is also done when, by our lives and actions, we wilfully sin against the Saviour and resist the Holy Ghost. St. Paul speaks of some who "profess that they know God, but *in works deny him*" (Tit. 1 : 16); and it is certain that Christ is no less denied by a wicked and satanic life, than he is by a verbal abjuration. It is with hypocrisy and an empty profession of the faith as it is with open wickedness; and this is strikingly illustrated by our Lord's parable of the two sons, who were commanded by their father to go and work in his vineyard. The one (*openly* denying) said, "I will not;" while the other (*professing* obedience) said, "I go, sir," and went not. Matt. 21 : 28–30.

5. This is a forcible representation of those Christians who make religion to consist in empty profession without obedience. They will cry "Yea, yea," and "Lord, Lord!" (Matt. 7 : 21), and yet are worse than others, because they pretend to be children of the Father, and yet do not, in any respect, obey his will. Their character

is thus given by St. Paul: "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." 2 Tim. 3:5. Now, what is it to deny the power of godliness but to deny Christ himself, and to shake off allegiance to him, and thus to act the part of a heathen under the mask and name of a Christian? These are "the children of unbelief or disobedience," in whom the spirit, not of Christ, but of *this world*, worketh. Eph. 2:2. They, therefore, who usurp a Christian's name, and yet do not a Christian's work, shall be denied, in their turn, by the Saviour when he shall pronounce the sentence: "I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." Matt. 7:23.

CHAPTER X.

THE CHILDREN OF THE WORLD ARE AGAINST CHRIST, AND, CONSEQUENTLY, THEIR LIFE AND THEIR CHRISTIANITY ARE BOTH ALIKE FALSE.

He that is not with me is against me.—MATT. 12:30.

IF the conduct of the generality of men in the present age be examined by the standard of life and doctrine left us by Christ, we must soon come to the conclusion that it is wholly *unchristian*, and totally repugnant to his example. The lives of men in our day are, in too many cases, made up of insatiable avarice, sordid and self-seeking manners, worldly-mindedness, worldly cares, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life; disobedience, wrath, strife, hatred, malice, contentions, and a violent thirst after human applause, pomps, and dignities. Add to these the jealousies, the revenge, the secret feuds and envyings, the unforgiving spirit, the injustice and hypocrisy, the frauds and calumnies, the lies and perjuries, together with all the impurity and unrighteousness with which the world so exceedingly abounds. In short, the whole life of the children of this generation consists of the love of the world, self-love, self-honor, and self-seeking.

2. To all this the life of Christ is entirely opposed; it can have no sort of communion with it. His life is nothing else but pure and sincere love to God and men. It is composed of humanity and kindness, of meekness and patience, of humility and obedience even unto death, of mercy and righteousness, of truth and simplicity, of purity and holiness, of contempt of the world, its honors, wealth, and pleasures; of self-denial; of the cross, tribulations, and afflictions; of fervent desires after the kingdom of God, and after the fulfilment of the divine will. This is the life of Christ, to which the false Christianity of the present age is so greatly opposed.

3. If, then, it be the truth that he who is not *with* Christ is accounted as one that is *against* him; and he that *standeth* not *in* the will of God, as he that *withstandeth* it (and we know that this is the meaning of the language of our Lord himself), it is most evident that the generality of those who make a public profession of the Christian

faith, not being with Christ, must be against him. They have no communion with him, but are contrary to him; they are not led by a Christian, but by an antichristian spirit. Scarcely any, indeed, are to be found who are of one soul, one will, one mind, and one spirit with him; and yet only these can be Christ's, or be accounted his disciples. It is in reference to the latter that the apostle speaks when he says, they have "the mind of Christ" (1 Cor. 2 : 16); and, in another place, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." Phil. 2 : 5. The children of the world have not this mind, and it is hence certain that they are not *with* but *against* Christ. Now whatever any man's profession and doctrine be, he who is thus *against* Christ in his life and actions, is most undoubtedly an antichrist. 1 John 2 : 18.

4. Where, alas! shall we now find true Christians, in the midst of so many *unchristian* disorders that universally abound? How justly may they be termed "a little flock!" (Luke 12 : 32) as they were called by our Lord himself. How justly has the prophet Isaiah compared the church to a solitary cottage in a vineyard, and to a wasted city! Isa. 1 : 8. "Woe is me!" exclaims Micah, "I am as when they have gathered the summer fruits, as the grape-gleanings of the vintage: there is no cluster to eat: my soul desires the first ripe fruit. The good man is perished out of the earth; and there is none upright among men." Micah 7 : 1, 2. See also Ps. 74 : 19; 102 : 7.

5. God alone knows where and who these are: but be they where and who they may, assuredly Christ is with them, yea, in them, "alway, even unto the end of the world." Matt. 28 : 20. Nor will he ever leave them without sufficient succor; "I will not leave you comfortless," he says; "I will come unto you." John 14 : 18. For he knoweth them that are his, and those whom he is said to *know*, he watches over with never-ceasing and distinguishing care. "The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his." But who *are his?* The answer is immediately annexed: "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." 2 Tim. 2 : 19. But let those who are not disposed to obey this injunction, assume some *other* name that shall better accord with their conduct; and let them not name *His* name, until they conform to His life by a living faith.

CHAPTER XI.

SHOWING THAT HE DOES NOT TRULY REPENT, IS NOT A CHRISTIAN, AND NOT A CHILD OF GOD, WHO DOES NOT, IN HIS LIFE AND CONDUCT, FOLLOW CHRIST; ALSO, WHEREIN THE NEW BIRTH AND THE YOKE OF CHRIST CONSIST.

Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps.—1 PET. 2:21.

GOD has appointed our Lord Jesus Christ to be our prophet or teacher; and, by a voice from heaven, has commanded us to hear him; saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye him." Matt. 17:5. This office was most faithfully executed by the Son of God, not only in words, but (as became a teacher engaged in so sacred a function) by a most holy and unblemished life. In allusion to this, St. Luke thus prefaces his account of the Acts of the Apostles: "The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to *do* and teach, etc."; where, it is to be remarked, that he places *doing* before *teaching;* intimating that these ought never to be separated. It certainly is the duty of every true teacher, first, to practise himself the duties which he purposes to teach others. Such a teacher was our Lord Jesus; and his conduct is the pattern of teaching, and the book of life which we ought to study.

2. It was for this cause, that the Son of God became man, and conversed with men upon earth, that he might give us a visible example of an innocent, perfect, and divine life; and that we might follow him as a light that shineth in darkness, to lead us in the way in which we should go. Hence he calls himself "the light of the world;" and promises that "he who followeth him shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." John 8:12.

3. Hence it clearly appears, that they who refuse to follow Christ in his life, and to tread by faith in his steps, remain in darkness, and are not in the way to obtain "the light of life." But what is this *darkness?* It is an impenitent and depraved life, called by the apostle "works of darkness," which are to be cast off, that so we may put on "the armor of light" (Rom. 13:12); and in genuine repentance both these duties are comprised.

4. It has been abundantly proved above, that godly sorrow and true faith thoroughly change a man; that they crucify the flesh, effect an entire transformation in the soul, and beget, through the Holy Ghost, a new life. Lest, however, this should be a mere theoretical knowledge, devoid of life and practice, God has been pleased to set before us his own Son, not only as a ransom and a Mediator, but also as a *mirror* of perfect godliness, and as a most finished pattern of the new man, who is regenerated after the image of God. In him, the fleshly Adam, the corrupt nature, never reigned; but the blessed God alone. Him it hath pleased God to set forth before our

eyes, that, contemplating him and his righteous life, we might be daily more and more renewed after his image. Let us explain this point more fully.

5. Sad experience teaches us continually, that our whole nature, body and soul, is polluted with every kind of sin, vice, and corruption. These are the works of the devil appearing in the carnal man; and it is principally in the depraved and perverted *will*, that these diabolical operations are most visibly discerned. For the depraved will is the root of all sin: if that were removed, there would be sin no more. With regard to the power and natural bias of this will, it consists chiefly in turning man away from God and from *His* will. Now, whatever departs from that Being who is the sovereign and supreme Good, cannot but be in itself evil; for it partakes of the nature of the supreme evil, and is a violation of the original constitution of our nature, as derived from God himself. It was this *turning away* from God that produced the fall both of Satan and of man; whence sin entered into the world, and has, by fleshly generation, passed upon all men.

6. The nature of man is then inoculated with the nature of the devil himself, and his will tainted with satanical wickedness, as with deadly poison. Hence Christ called the Pharisees "children of the devil" (John 8:44); and even to one of his own disciples gave the name of Satan (John 6:70); intimating as though the covetousness, lying, pride, and evil concupiscence, by which the nature of all men is defiled, were Satan himself.

7. Hence it may, with all propriety, be affirmed, that they who lead a life void of repentance, a life of pride, avarice, lust, and envy, live in the devil, and partake of his nature. Such persons may assume the garb of honesty; they may veil their real characters under a fair show of morality and correct deportment; yet, *inwardly*, according to the saying of Christ to the Jews, they are, nevertheless, devils. John 8:44. Such a declaration is dreadful to be made; but the truth of it is confirmed, both by the Word of God and by continual experience.

8. Our nature, as fallen creatures, being thus miserably depraved, thus desperately perverted, and vitiated in all its springs; there is an absolute necessity that it should be purified and *renewed*. There must be a *total renovation* of the soul, in all its powers and all its faculties. But how shall this be effected? We answer: As the *chief evil* has made a breach upon our nature, and has infused poison into its very springs; so must the *chief Good* revisit and renew our nature, that it may be assimilated to itself. That which the supreme evil has so radically corrupted, can be corrected only by a thorough and vital *penetration* of the supreme Good, even of God himself; and, therefore, it was necessary that the Word should be made flesh.

9. The Son of God truly became man, not for his own sake, but for our sakes; that, by reconciling us to God by himself, he might make us partakers of the sovereign good, having cleansed and sanctified us, to that end; for whatever is to be sanctified, must be sanctified by God and with God. And as God is in Christ, so ought we to be united to him by faith, that we may live in God, and God in us; we in Christ, and Christ in us (2 Cor. 5: 19, 21); that the will of God be in us, and we in the will of God, being made the righteousness of God in Christ. 2 Cor. 5: 21. This is the only way in which Christ admin-

isters medicine to our corrupt nature; and the more powerfully he influences man, the more thoroughly will human nature be purified.

10. Oh! how blessed is the man in whom Christ does all and is all; whose will, thoughts, mind, and words, are the will, thoughts, mind, and words of Christ! It was thus the apostle said, "We have the mind of Christ." 1 Cor. 2:16. And so indeed it must be with the believer; because the life of Christ is the new life, yea, the new man in him; and whoever lives in Christ after the Spirit, hath really put on the new man, and all the graces with which he is adorned. His meekness and obedience are the meekness and obedience of Christ; his patience and humility are the patience and humility of Christ; and his life itself is the life of Christ, by whom and in whom he lives. This is the "new creature" which is created after God (2 Cor. 5: 17); and that life of Christ in us, of which St. Paul experimentally says, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Gal. 2:20. This is to follow Christ truly. This is to walk in the light of his life, and to bring forth "fruits meet for repentance;" for, by this means, the "old man" is destroyed, the carnal life gradually declines, and the new and divine life is established in the soul. He who has this life is not a *nominal*, but a *real* Christian; a Christian not in word and in appearance only, but in deed and in truth. He is a true child of God, begotten of Him, and quickened and renewed by faith after the image of Jesus Christ.

11. Although we cannot attain to a state of perfection, while encompassed with so many infirmities that obstruct our progress in the divine life, we ought not, therefore, to be discouraged, but rather to be inspired with more fervor in seeking after a consummation so much to be desired. We ought ardently to wish and pray, to endeavor and study, that the kingdom of Christ be established within us, and the kingdom of Satan destroyed. 1 John 3:9; Eph. 2:5. The object of our cares and efforts, of our groans and prayers, should be — how we may more and more mortify the old man by daily repentance. For, the more a man dies to himself, the more Christ lives in him; the more corruptions are removed by the good Spirit of God, the more divine grace possesses the heart. In proportion as the flesh is crucified, the spirit is quickened; as the works of darkness are put off, the armor of light from above is put on; and in the same degree as the *outward* man perisheth, the *inward* man is strengthened and renewed. 2 Cor. 4:16; Col. 3:5. The decrease of the carnal life, is the increase of that which is spiritual and divine. As the affections of the former, self-love, ambition, wrath, covetousness, and voluptuousness, are weakened and subdued, so are opposite affections of the spiritual life invigorated and raised. The farther a man departs from the world, from "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" (1 John 2:16); the more do God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit enter into the heart and dwell there. And, on the other hand, the more nature, flesh, darkness, and the world, reign in man; the less of grace, light, the Holy Spirit, God, and Christ, is there to be found in him.

12. This spiritual life is enmity to the flesh, because the latter is hereby restrained, subdued, and brought under the yoke, and crucified with its "affections and lusts." In this, however, consist the power, efficacy, and fruit

of true repentance. The nature of flesh and blood is to lead a lawless, dissolute, and voluptuous life, unshackled by restraint, and entirely agreeable to its own will and humor. It is this which it finds sweet, and in which it rejoices. To the flesh and the "old man," the life of Christ is a most severe cross, and an intolerable burden; but to the new and spiritual man, "this yoke is easy and this burden light" (Matt. 11 : 30), and attended with divine serenity and peace of mind. For the true rest of the soul will be sought for in vain, unless in faith in Christ; in his meekness and humility, patience and love. Here he hath himself promised, "Ye shall find rest unto your souls." Yea, he that really loves the Lord Jesus, will not deem it hard to suffer even death for his sake, but account it a joy and a happiness. Such is the yoke of the Saviour, which we are invited to take upon us, that we may find "rest unto our souls."

13. It is necessary, therefore, that every one who is resolved to take upon himself the yoke of Christ, and to imitate His holy example, should, in the first place, shake off the yoke of Satan, and repress the carnal, selfish, and unruly propensities of his fallen nature, in order that the flesh may vex the spirit no more. All must be subjugated to the obedience of Christ, to the wise and righteous discipline of his law; that is, the will, understanding, reason, and appetites, together with the sensual desires of the old Adam, that before reigned in the mortal body, must henceforth yield a free obedience to the government of the Lord. Rom. 6 : 12.

14. True it is that the flesh is highly gratified when honored, courted, and praised, and when abounding in the riches and pleasures of this life; but the yoke of Christ, by which the flesh is mortified and subdued, requires us to prefer ignominy, contempt, and poverty, to affluence and honor; to account ourselves unworthy of these things, and freely to give up all that is great in the estimation of the world. It is here that the humility and life of Christ are most striking and apparent. This is the "yoke" and this the "burden," which are easy and light to the spirit; this is the law of love, the commandments of which are not grievous but delightful. 1 John 5 : 3. What was the whole life of Christ but holy poverty, extreme contempt, and severe persecution? Is it not true that he "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many"? Matt. 20 : 28.

15. It is the tendency of the natural man to desire to excel others, and to be thought of importance; but the spiritual man loves the humility of the Redeemer, and desires to be reputed as nothing in this world. The carnal man, that follows the propensities of corrupt nature, and has never learned of Christ humility, meekness, and love, deems it folly to live as Jesus lived, and thinks those only are wise who indulge their appetites in security, and satiate themselves with every object which they desire; and when such a one most lives in the devil, he is so blinded by ignorance and darkness as to esteem his own life the happiest that can be desired, and to applaud himself in his own folly. And hence it is that these deluded wretches, following the false light of carnal wisdom, are not only deceived themselves, but are the means of involving others in the same ruin. They, on the contrary, whose minds have been enlightened by the true and eternal light, are struck with

horror and surprise whenever they cast their eyes upon the pomps and vanities of this world, upon the ambition and pride, the wrath and revenge, the intemperance and voluptuousness, and the other fruits of the carnal life which universally abound. Their language is: "Alas! how far removed is all this from Christ! How far from true repentance and the knowledge of Jesus is the man that acts thus! How far from the nature and disposition of a child of God! Alas! he is still dead in sins, and a slave of the devil." That man, therefore, who does not imitate the life of Christ, is an entire stranger to true repentance; he is not a Christian, nor a child of God; nay, he is wholly ignorant of Jesus Christ; for he who desires to know Christ savingly, both as the Saviour of the world and as the great exemplar of life, must know him to be pure meekness, gentleness, and love, and to be wholly composed of patience and humility. This living ensample of goodness and piety which the Lord hath set before him, he must carry in his heart, and must labor to be transformed into its image. The virtues that resided in Christ he must have within himself; and if he would ever effectually know him, he must love and admire them in his inward soul. As a plant discovers its nature by the fragrance which it diffuses around, so the knowledge of Christ discovers itself by the sweet and sacred odors which proceed from it. Then is acquired an experimental knowledge of the life, power, rest, and consolation which flow from the Saviour; which circulate through all the faculties of the soul, and quicken them by a kind of spiritual sweetness. Thus is man made to "taste how good the Lord is" (Ps. 34:8); thus is the truth known, and the supreme and eternal good apprehended and enjoyed. And thus is it certainly ascertained that the life of Christ is infinitely superior to every other life in goodness and sweetness, in dignity and in peace; yea, that it resembles life eternal itself, being indeed the foretaste of such a life upon *earth.*

16. As there is nothing more excellent than the life of Christ, nothing more delightful, more peaceful, or more satisfying to the soul, it ought to have no rival in our affections, but to be endeared to us above all things else. He who is destitute of Christ and of his knowledge, can form no conception of the rest and quiet of eternal life; or of the sovereign good; or of the everlasting truth; or of the imperishable word; or of the joy of the soul; or of the true light of love; for all these centre in Christ, and he who has him has them; because Christ is all these to the man who truly believes in his holy name. "Every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love." 1 John 4: 7, 8.

17. It is, therefore, most evident that the fruits and effect of the new birth do not consist in words, however sound, or in a *form* of godliness, however specious, but in an *abiding substance*, even in that *love* which is God himself. A son bears the image of him who begat him; and whoever is born of God should evidence it by *love*, for God is love; and hence it is clear that "he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him." 1 John 4: 16.

18. The *knowledge of God*, in like manner, does not consist in words, nor in merely speculative and superficial knowledge, but in a vital, con-

solatory, and divine feeling, in a pure and unmixed pleasure, gently infusing itself into the heart by faith, and penetrating it with an unutterable and heavenly sweetness. This is a true, living, and efficacious knowledge of God; such as that which the Psalmist means when he says, "My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God" (Ps. 84 : 2); and again, "Thy loving kindness (as experienced in the divine sensations of my soul) is better than life" (Ps. 63 : 3); that is, this divine life infinitely transcends every other life; in which it is evident that he means that unutterable joy which is produced by an *experimental* knowledge of God, and which is infused into a believing heart. Thus man liveth in God, and God in man; and thus man knoweth God in truth, and is known of God.

CHAPTER XII.

THE TRUE CHRISTIAN DIES UNTO HIMSELF AND THE WORLD, AND LIVES IN CHRIST.

Christ died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.—2 Cor. 5 : 15.

"CHRIST," says the apostle, "died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again." Besides that this sentence is replete with divine consolation, declaring that Jesus died for all, it inculcates a lesson of the most salutary nature, namely, that we should live not unto ourselves, but unto him who died for us. To live to him, however, before we are dead to ourselves, is impossible. If, therefore, thy resolution be to live to Christ, thou must certainly die to the world and to thyself; but if thou rather inclinest to live to the world and to thyself, it follows that thou must renounce thy communion with the Saviour. For what communion hath light with darkness, Christ with the world, or the Spirit with the flesh? 2 Cor. 6 : 14, 15.

2. There are three kinds of death: the one *spiritual*, the second *natural*, and the third *eternal*. The first occurs when a man dies daily to himself; that is, to his own carnal desires, to his avarice, pride, lust, and wrath, and such other sins and passions as have their rise in a corrupt nature.

3. It is of the second kind of death that the apostle speaks, where he says, "To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." Phil. 1 : 21. As if he had said, Christ is the life and death, the gain and advantage of the believer, even when he passes through *natural* death, for, by it, he exchanges a short and miserable life for an eternal and blessed one; and earthly objects for possessions that are eternal and divine: an exchange which cannot but prove in the highest degree gainful to himself.

4. If, however, any think that the apostle's language is also to be understood of the *spiritual* death of sin, they will not commit an error. For thrice happy is the soul to whom, in this

sense, "to live is Christ:" thrice happy the soul in which Jesus lives by faith, and that imitates the graces which manifested themselves in him, especially those of humility and meekness. But alas! by far the greater part of men have put on the life of the devil rather than the life of the Lord Jesus Christ, by yielding to avarice, pride, anger, and other unholy passions.

5. Awake, therefore, O man! and consider who it is that liveth in thee. If thou canst truly affirm, "to me, to live is Christ," happy art thou, as it respects both this world and the world to come. Here, even on earth, let Christ be thy life, that he may be thy life to all eternity: and in order to this, account it the greatest of gain, when thou art enabled to die to the world and to thy own corruptions. Then, in both senses, for thee, to live is Christ, and to die, gain. What, indeed, can be more profitable or advantageous, than to die, in this respect, to all thy sinful desires and affections? Go on, then, in the Lord, and never faint, allowing Christ to live in thee now, that thou mayest also live with him hereafter.

6. No man is capable of settled peace and tranquillity, who is distracted and disturbed with earthly desires and designs; therefore, before thou canst live unto Christ, thou must die to the flesh and to the world. This dying to self and living to Christ, may be illustrated by a reference to several types and histories in the Old Testament.

7. Thus, as the promise relative to Christ, and the seal of it by circumcision, were not given to Abraham, until he had quitted his father's house and relinquished his earthly inheritance (Gen. 12:1, and 17:10), so man, as long as his affections cleave to the world, is unprepared to receive the promise which is by the Saviour; and as long as he refuses to die to it, and deny himself, so long it is impossible that he should enjoy Christ, or the things which are His.

8. Jesus can never live in thy soul, until thou art dead to the affections of carnal nature. St. Paul was thus dead; and hence he could say, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. 2:20); and writing to the church at Colosse, he says, "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." Col. 3:3.

9. A man may be considered as dead to sin, when sin dies in him, and he ceases from the commission of it. The same apostle says, "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." Gal. 5:25. If we live in Christ, we must walk even as he walked; for it is not sufficient to boast of the Spirit in words, while our words are not confirmed by our works; or of faith, while this is not evidenced by its fruits. Indeed it is said unto *all*,— "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye, through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." Rom. 8:13.

10. Multitudes, however, may be compared to Saul, who, instead of slaying Agag (1 Sam. 15:8), according to the commandment of God, only cast him into prison. They do not *destroy* their lusts and sinful desires; but are contented to conceal, and as it were imprison them, that at a future opportunity, they may indulge them with the greater secresy. But let us carefully avoid this trifling; and instead of subjecting our corrupt propensities to a temporary restraint, let us lay the axe of mortification to the very root: for unless this be effected,

we shall, like Saul, be cast out from the kingdom, and lose the crown of everlasting life.

11. Some professed friends of religion resemble trees, the leaves of which fall off when winter approaches, but their foliage appears again when the season becomes more favorable and mild; for in the winter of adversity, they conceal their lusts, and restrain their sinful propensities; but when prosperity smiles upon them, they break out again, as at the first, and return to their evil ways. This is an evidence of *hypocrisy;* whereas a true Christian is in all circumstances, and under every vicissitude, whether public or private, always the same, and remains unalterably fixed in his God. He is the same both in prosperity and adversity, in poverty and in affluence, steadily cleaving to God, and meeting with resignation every affliction that Providence lays upon him.

12. The history of Ahab (1 Kings 20:42) furnishes us with another instance, not much unlike the case of Saul; for, in opposition to the command of God, he spared the life of the king of Syria; and, in consequence, sentence went forth against him, and his life was required for that of the captive king. They who nourish in their breasts those lusts which are the enemies of God and of themselves, and which are appointed to destruction, voluntarily draw upon themselves everlasting death and damnation.

13. Neither prayer nor a devout spirit can ever be perfected in man, without the mortification of the flesh. Thus God appointed that every beast which approached the holy mount of Sinai should be destroyed. Exod. 19: 12, 13. How much more does it behoove us to slay our unholy lusts and affections, if we would ever ascend the mountain of the Lord's house (Isaiah 2:2, 3; Mic. 4:2), offer up the incense of prayer, or meditate upon the Word of God! If we neglect to do this, we are already judged, and shall be banished forever from the presence of the Lord.

14. Jacob (Gen. ch. 29) served for his beloved Rachel twice seven years; and love so alleviated his toil, that the years seemed but as so many days: thus, for the salvation of our souls, did Christ Jesus undergo thirty and three years' service, and what Jacob said of himself is, in an eminent degree, applicable to Him: "In the day, the drought consumed me, and the frost by night; and my sleep departed from mine eyes" (Gen. 31:40): "for the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." Matt. 20:28. Shall we, then, scruple to love Christ again, and to fight under his banner against his enemy, the world?

CHAPTER XIII.

THE CHRISTIAN OUGHT WILLINGLY TO DIE UNTO HIMSELF AND THE WORLD, FOR THE SAKE OF THE LOVE OF CHRIST, AND FOR THE SAKE OF THAT FUTURE AND ETERNAL GLORY, FOR WHICH WE WERE CREATED AND REDEEMED.

Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.—2 COR. 8 : 9.

THOU art required, O man! to die to thyself, thy sin, and the world; and to lead a holy, harmless life, according to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This thou art to do, not with a view to merit anything at the hands of God, but from a principle of love to him, who performed and merited all for thee, and died to save thee.

2. Be not deceived: Jesus must be loved by thee, not in word and in tongue, but in deed and in truth. "If," says he (John 14: 23), "a man love me, he will keep my words;" and so St. John speaks: "This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous." 1 John 5 : 3. And, again, the Saviour says: "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Matt. 11 : 30. To him, indeed, who loves Christ with all his heart, it cannot but be easy to sacrifice the pleasure which earthly vanities afford, and to do that which is good, without constraint. Love renders every burden light that is laid upon us by Jesus; whereas to him that is devoid of this heavenly principle, every act which duty requires is grievous and oppressive. To such a one, every religious exercise is painful and laborious; whereas the man who sincerely loves the Lord Jesus Christ, esteems death itself to be in nowise terrible, when submitted to for his sake. And, therefore, the Apostle says: "Unto you it is given, in the the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake" (Phil. 1 : 29); nay, to lay down life itself, whenever that sacrifice is required of us.

3. In order to confirm thy faith, consider the example of Moses, who, "by faith, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt." Heb. 11 : 24–26.

4. Consider Daniel, who refused the luxuries of a court, and desired to be fed with pulse and water, resolving "that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank." Dan. 1 : 8, 12. He contemned the pleasures of Babylon, that he might attain "the wisdom that is from above" (James 3 : 17), which dwells only in a heart preserved pure from the pollutions of an unholy world. So, if thou desirest that Christ, the eternal Wisdom, should enter into thy soul, thou must abhor the pleasures of sin. For as Daniel and his companions were made fairer by their sobriety and abstemious life, so be thou firmly assured, that thy soul will appear more beautiful and fair in the

sight of God, even as "partaking of the divine nature," if thou escape "the corruption that is in the world through lust." 2 Pet. 1 : 4.

5. Consider, further, the example of St. Paul, who says, "The world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Gal. 6 : 14); that is, I am dead to the world, and the world is dead to me. Thus are all true Christians *in* the world, yet not *of* it. Though they live in it, they do not love it; for they view it as a transient shadow; and its pomps, dignities, and lusts, as vanity and deceit, vexation and disappointment. Hence, they are crucified to the world, though they remain in it; and the world is crucified to them; that is, they desire no mere worldly honor, wealth or joy.

6. How happy is the man who is dead to earthly vanities, and alive to God; separated from the world, and drawn into Christ! How blessed is he into whose heart divine grace is so infused, as wholly to wean it from inferior objects, and exalt it to the fruition of the light and glory of heaven. Such a state is the effect of daily prayer and supplication, without which a true Christian cannot possibly exist.

7. Agur prayed to the Lord thus: "Two things, have I required of thee; deny me them not before I die. Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me." Prov. 30 : 7, 8. So let the Christian pray: "Two things I desire of thee, O Lord, even these two: that I may die to myself, and to the world." For without this death, it is utterly impossible to be a true Christian. If thou, O Man! thinkest otherwise, thou certainly deceivest thyself, and shalt at last hear from the mouth of Christ that awful sentence, "I know you not." Matt. 7 : 23; 25 : 12.

8. Though to die thus to self and to the world, is, to flesh and blood, a grievous cross, yet will the spirit and the love of Christ eventually triumph over every difficulty. So powerful indeed are these aids, that they enable the true Christian to bear all things for the sake of the Beloved, as a pleasant yoke and easy burden. And although he who lives a life thus mortified, will be hated by the world, yet shall he be loved of God; for the enmity of the world is friendship with him (James 4 : 4). And the Lord hath himself declared, "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." John 15 : 19.

9. Those who are dead to the world for the testimony of Jesus, it casts out; but it honors and applauds them who, living in the enjoyment of its pomp and splendor, are its genuine offspring; because they live in the world, and the world liveth in them.

10. In short, that man is not received and commended by the world, but is, on the contrary, cast out of it, in whose heart, pride, covetousness, lust, wrath, revenge, and the other corrupt passions of nature, are mortified and restrained. Unto him the world is dead; and he again is dead to the world: he begins to live in Christ, and Christ lives in him: and he will be confessed by the Saviour, as one of his peculiar people, in whom the great design of redemption has been effected. To others, on the contrary, it will be said, "I know you not, as ye, in like manner, knew me not." You have not confessed me before men, but have been ashamed of my life, my meekness, humility, and patience; and I will not confess you:

you have despised the shame of my cross; and you shall be with shame disowned by me. Mark 8:38. For whoever refuses to live with Christ in time, cannot expect to live with him in eternity: whoever has not the life of Christ here, shall never have it set forth in him hereafter: and whoever disdains to follow Jesus in the present world, shall never be glorified with him in the world to come.

11. Therefore, O Man! strictly scrutinize thy life, and see whether thou bearest a greater conformity to the life of Christ, or to the life of the devil: for thou must inevitably be united to one or other of these throughout all eternity.

12. If thou art dead to thyself and to thy depraved desires within thee, thou wilt find it no hard task to die to the world and its vain allurements which are without thee: and whoever is thus dead to the world, will not love it or the things which it contains; for, "if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." 1 John 2:15. Again, how shall his desires any more go out after the world without him, when he is dead to it? Great indeed would be the loss sustained by a lover of the blessed God, were he, in any degree, to yield to the allurements of the world, and allow it to obtain a share in that affection which should be fixed solely on the Supreme Good. A soul so undecided would soon be entirely vanquished by the blandishments of sin, as was Samson by the charms of Delilah (Judg. 16:6); and would become subject to all that misery and vexation of heart, which invariably attend the love of this world.

13. The love of the world appertains not to the *new* creature, but to the *old:* for the world has nothing to bestow but honor and vainglory, riches, pleasures, and carnal desires; in these the "old man" delights. The new man, on the other hand, has no peace except in Christ, who is his honor and glory, his riches and his heaven.

14. And as nothing can be conceived of that is greater or more exalted than the image of God renewed in Christ Jesus, so it should be our only concern and care, to render ourselves partakers of this exalted honor; remembering the words of Tauler, "What man, who is possessed of reason, can doubt for a moment, that God can infinitely more rejoice and delight the heart, than the corrupt and indigent creature is capable of doing?"

15. In addition to this, the Scriptures assure us that man was not created for the world's sake, but the world for man's. It was not to pamper his appetite, to heap up riches, or to extend his empire without limits, that man was formed; it was not that he might acquire large estates and possessions, erect palaces, or be gorgeously attired, that he was endued with a soul intelligent and immortal: man was made to be *lord* of the earth, and not its *slave;* to subdue, and not to be subdued. He was not to seek his pleasure and enjoyment on earth, however fair and fascinating it might be to a depraved taste: he was not destined to be an heir of this inferior world, nor the possessor of terrestrial treasures, nor to be actuated by any worldly motive whatsoever. Man is to depart hence, as one that dwells on earth as a *tenant at will.* He was not made for it, and cannot remain in it; he entered it naked, and naked he must quit it again. Many, indeed, are

born into the world at the same time; but an equal number, on the other hand, are daily taken out by death; nor can any carry with them even an atom of the treasures which they had accumulated upon earth.

16. Man, then, is but a guest and a pilgrim below; and most obvious it is, that he was not created for this temporal life, and that this world was never designed to be the *end* of his being. That *end* is God, and the image of God in Christ Jesus, unto which we are renewed by the Spirit; and we are created for the kingdom of God and for eternal life. These our blessed Redeemer purchased for us, when they had been forfeited by us; and it is his Spirit that regenerates men who had been without God in the world.

17. How unreasonable, therefore, is it in man to fix his affections on temporal objects, when we are assured that the soul is infinitely more noble and more precious than the whole world! How preposterous is it, that he should lavish his time in the pursuit of earthly things, when he is conscious that he was created to bear the image of God in Christ, through the Holy Spirit! Therefore, let us now solemnly repeat what has been before affirmed, namely, that man was not made for the world, but the world for man. The excellency of the image of God in Christ Jesus, is inconceivably great and glorious: so that were all mankind to unite their labor and might, their wealth, their honors, and their all, they could not succeed in restoring even *one* soul to the possession of this image. It became requisite that Christ himself should die, in order that this divine image which had been utterly defaced by sin, might, through His Spirit, be revived; and that man might again become the temple and house of God through all eternity.

18. This being duly considered, as certainly it ought to be, how is it that man so thoroughly debases his soul as to seek after the things of this world, its honors, its pleasures, lusts, and wealth? He should surely reason with himself, and say: "Shall I, for the sake of a little gold, or for this fading world, or for all the honors and pleasures it can afford me,—shall I, for the sake of *these*, sacrifice my *immortal soul*, which Christ has redeemed at so infinite a price? God forbid." "What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Matt. 16 : 26. Alas! the "whole world," with all its power and glory, could not avail to rescue one soul from eternal destruction; for the soul is immortal, while the world passeth away with all that it contains. 1 Cor. 7 : 31; 1 John 2 : 17.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE TRUE CHRISTIAN, WHO IMITATES CHRIST, HATES HIS OWN LIFE IN THIS WORLD, AND FORSAKES THE WORLD.

If any man come to me, and hate not . . . . his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.—LUKE 14 : 26. *He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.*—JOHN 12 : 25.

IN order that a man may hate himself, he must, in the first place, cease to love himself; secondly, he must daily die to sin; and, thirdly, maintain a continual warfare with his corrupt nature, or the flesh.

2. There is nothing that more obstructs the everlasting salvation of mankind than *self-love*. This is not to be understood of that natural love which excites to a due regard to self-preservation, but of that carnal and inordinate affection which influences man to be wholly concerned about himself, without any reference to the Supreme Being, the great Author of life. In this sense the term is used in the present Book. Man was created to love God alone; and since God only is to be loved, it follows that he who loves himself is an idolater, and makes of himself a god. The heart of man rejoices and rests in the object of his affection; and, whatever this be, he is brought by it into bondage, and is devoted to it. Man, in this state, is become a servant, and is deprived of that genuine liberty in the enjoyment of which he was originally created; and in this lapsed and divided state he must serve as many masters as there are objects upon which his affections are placed. But if thy love, O man! be sincerely and simply fixed on God, then thou art subject to no lord but Him; and thou preservest thy liberty with all the privileges appertaining to it. It becometh thee, therefore, to be very circumspect in thy life and conduct, lest thou shouldst in any degree obstruct the progress of divine love in thy soul. If ever thou desirest to possess God alone, thou must make a surrender of thyself solely to him. If thou lovest and pleasest thyself, instead of loving and pleasing God, then sorrow and fear, sadness and anxiety, will inevitably attend thee; whereas, if thou wholly yieldest thyself unto God, cleaving to him and delighting thyself in him alone, then he will never leave thee nor forsake thee, but remove by his gracious presence all fear and anxiety from thy mind. He, on the other hand, who seeks himself in all situations and in every circumstance, and who incessantly pursues after profit, praise, and lust, can never attain to serenity and peace of mind; for some circumstance there always will be to cross his desires and to disturb his rest. Never, therefore, yield to the belief that an accession of fame, wealth, or honor in this world, is always good and profitable for thee; when, on the contrary, a righteous contempt of all such transient objects, nay, an utter extirpation of our love of them, would be attended with an infinite blessing and advantage.

3. As then, on the one hand, the things of this life, such as praise,

riches, and pleasure, are frail, and pass away with the world that supplies them, while, on the other, the love of God endureth forever, it is evident that no satisfaction can be durable that is founded upon the love of self and of earthly objects. Such peace would be interrupted by every trivial circumstance that occurred; whereas, when the mind is firmly set upon God and upon his love, it cannot fail to be preserved in perfect peace and perpetual serenity amid all the changes of this life. Forsake thou, therefore, all things, and thou shalt, by faith, recover all things again; for never can the lover of himself and of the world find the blessed God.

4. Inordinate self-love is begotten of the world, and not of God; it is earthly, and the chief enemy to "the wisdom which is from above." James 3:17. This wisdom does not seek the praise and applause of men; and though in itself "a pearl of great price" (Matt. 13:46), yet appearing with no other recommendation than its own native simplicity, it is but little valued in the world, and, with but few exceptions, is entirely neglected and forgotten; and though there are many who make a boast of this wisdom, yet the gem conceals itself from all who do not desire to apply it in their practice. If, therefore, thou desirest to be possessed of it, O man! lay aside all that human wisdom which "puffeth up" (1 Cor. 8:1), together with thy self-love and self-applause, and then shalt thou exchange thy earthly wisdom, which the world admires, for that which is heavenly and divine. Then, instead of the wisdom of this world, which in its nature is elevated and seeks the applause of men, thou shalt be put in possession of a wisdom which, far from attracting the notice of the world, is despised and rejected by it, but which is, nevertheless, of a divine origin, and of everlasting continuance.

5. It is impossible to love God, until thou abhorrest thyself; that is, until thou art heartily displeased with thyself and with thy sins; until thy own carnal nature is crucified, together with the evil propensities of thy self-will. For the more a man strives to love God, the more he labors to subdue the lusts of the flesh and his sensual appetites; and the more he departs from self and from self-love, by the power of the Spirit of God, the more nearly he approaches, by faith, unto God, and to his divine love. For as inward peace depends on a freedom from desires after the things of this world; so when this peace is once settled in the soul, and the heart has disengaged itself from the ties which bound it to the creature, it returns freely into God, and rests in him alone.

6. Now he who is sincerely disposed to deny himself, must follow, not his own will, but the will of Christ, who has declared, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life." John 14:6. As though he had said: "Without the way, no man walketh; without the truth, nothing is known; and without life, no man liveth: therefore, look upon me, who am the way in which it is thy duty to walk, the truth in which thou art called to believe, and the life in which thou art bound to live. I am the unerring way, the infallible truth, and the everlasting life: the way to immortality is through my merit; the truth itself is in my word; and life is through the efficacy of my death; and, therefore, if thou continuest in the *way*, the *truth* will guide thee unto eternal *life*. If thou desirest

not to go astray, follow me; if thou wilt know the truth, believe in me; and if thou wouldst possess life everlasting, put thy whole trust in me, who for thy sake have endured the death of the cross."

7. What, indeed, is the safe way, the infallible truth, and the endless life? What, the way, truth, and life, that are more excellent than every other? Surely there is no way, but the holy and precious merits of Christ; no truth, but his eternal word; no life, but a blissful immortality in heaven. If, therefore, O Christian! thou desirest to be raised up into heaven with Christ Jesus, believe in him here, and tread in the footsteps of his humility; this is the safe Way to everlasting glory. If thou wouldst escape the snares of the world, take hold of his Word by faith, and follow the example which he has left for thy imitation; because this is the infallible Truth. And if it be thy wish to live with Christ, then die thou with him and in him unto sin, and become a new creature; for this is Life. Thus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life; and he is so, both by his example and by his merit.

8. "Be ye followers of God as dear children." Eph. 5 : 1. Let us labor and strive after this one thing; that our lives may resemble the life of Christ. Were there nothing else to confound the false Christian, the example of Christ might effectually and abundantly do it. When we consider that Christ our Lord passed his life in grief and pain, we ought to be ashamed to spend our lives in ease and pleasures. If the soldier forgets his own ease and comfort when he beholds his captain fighting unto death, shalt thou pursue after worldly pleasures and honors, when thy Prince was so ignominiously treated, and, for thy sake, nailed to the cross? Is it not a sign that then thou dost not, in fact, fight under his banner?

9. It is true that, in our day, every one desires to be considered a Christian; but how few are they who imitate the life and deportment of Christ! Had it been the character of a follower of Christ, to aim at the acquisition of honors and possessions, our Lord would never have taught that these are not worthy to be compared with heavenly treasures. Contemplate the life and doctrine of the blessed Jesus, and thou shalt own that nothing can be more opposed than he and the world. Behold that manger and that stable! do they not forcibly evidence a contempt of worldly things? And will the example of Christ lead thee to err from the right way? No! he is the way, and he is the truth; and his life, compared with his doctrine, is the only means to preserve thee from mistake, and to guard thee from the delusions and errors of the world. Since then the Lord hath chosen to enter into his glory by the way of suffering and reproach, why shouldst thou labor to make thy way to hell, through the pomps and vanities of the world? Return, then, O deluded soul! escape from the broad way that leadeth unto death, and in which thy only enjoyment is "the pleasures of sin for a season" (Heb. 11 : 25); enter into this safe Way, in which the wayfaring man shall not stray: cordially embrace that Truth which never can deceive: and live in Him who is Life itself. This way is the truth, and this truth is the way. Awful blindness! a worm of the earth would make himself great in the world, when the Lord of glory abased himself to the very dust. O faithful soul! when thy bridegroom moves to

meet thee, clothed with humility, come down from the elevation of thy pride and ambition, and descend into the vale of humiliation to meet him, and he will embrace and receive thee with joy.

10. As Abraham quitted his father's house, to go into a land which the Lord was to show him (Gen. 12 : 1), so quit thou, as a true child of Abraham, the pleasure-house of self-will and self-love, that thou mayest obtain the divine blessing. Self-love biases the judgment, blinds the understanding, disturbs the reason, seduces the will, corrupts the conscience, closes the gates of life, and acknowledges neither God nor neighbor. It banishes virtue; seeks after honors, riches, and pleasures; and, in a word, prefers earth to heaven. He, therefore, who thus "loveth his life, shall lose it; but he that hateth his life" (that is, resists this principle of self-love), "shall keep it unto life eternal." John 12 : 25. Self-love is the root of impenitence, and the cause of damnation. They who are controlled by self-love and self-honor are destitute of humility and a knowledge of sin; consequently, they never can obtain the remission of sin, though they seek it with tears; their tears not being shed because they have offended God, but merely on account of the personal loss which they have sustained.

11. The kingdom of heaven is compared in Scripture to "a pearl of great price;" in order to obtain which, a man sold *all* that he had. Matt. 13 : 45, 46. This pearl is God himself, and that eternal life which he has promised, and for the attainment of which every other object must be forsaken. We have an example of this in our Lord Jesus Christ, who descended from heaven not for his own sake, but for thy sake; not for his own profit and advantage, but for thine. Luke 19 : 10. And wilt thou yet delay to love him who gave himself up unto death for thee?

12. It doubtless is the part of a faithful spouse, to please her husband alone: and art thou desirous of pleasing the world, when thou mayest be espoused unto Christ, the great lover of souls? Forsake therefore and sincerely despise all that is in the world, in order that thou mayest become worthy of the eminent dignity of this spiritual marriage: for if thy love cleave not solely to Christ, it is a corrupt and adulterous love, and not that which a Christian should bear to the Redeemer. For the Christian's love to the Redeemer must possess virgin purity.

13. The law of Moses required that the priest should marry a virgin (Levit. 21 : 13, 14); and Christ, our High Priest, will espouse only a *virgin-soul;* one that is attached to nothing that the world can offer, but solely to himself; nay, one that loves not even herself, in comparison with Christ. "If any man come to me," he says, "and hate not his *own life,* he cannot be my disciple." Luke 14 : 26.

14. In order to understand what is meant by hating ourselves, we are to remember that we carry about with us "the old man," and are indeed the old man himself; whose nature is to hasten from one sin to another, to love himself, to pursue his own profit and honor, and to indulge his own will and carnal appetite. For the flesh is at all times the same; always considering itself, easily grieved, envious, bitter, covetous, and revengeful. This, O Man! is what thou doest: these sinful motions proceed from thy heart; this is thy very life, even the

life of the old man in thee: and therefore thou must of necessity hate thyself, and thine own natural life, if ever thou desirest to be a disciple of Christ. Whoever loves himself, must love his own pride and avarice, his own wrath and hatred, envy and lying, perfidiousness and unrighteousness; and, in short, he must love all the progeny of unholy desires, and a corrupt heart. But if thou desirest to be a Christian indeed, thou must not love, nor excuse, nor palliate thy sins, but thou must hate them, forsake them, and subdue them.

CHAPTER XV.

SHOWING HOW THE "OLD MAN" DAILY DIES, AND THE "NEW MAN" IS DAILY RENEWED, IN A TRUE CHRISTIAN; ALSO, WHEREIN SELF-DENIAL CONSISTS, AND WHAT IS MEANT BY THE CHRISTIAN'S CROSS.

If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.—LUKE 9: 23.

IT is the charge of the apostle Paul, "Put off the *old man*, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and put on the *new man*, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." Eph. 4: 22–24. And in another of his Epistles, he gives us a reason for doing so: "Ye are not your own; for ye are bought with a price; therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." 1 Cor. 6: 19, 20.

2. We have already noticed what is meant by *the old man;* namely, pride, covetousness, lasciviousness, unrighteousness, wrath, enmity, hatred, etc.; all of which must die in the Christian, if ever the *new man* arise in him again, and is day by day renewed.

3. In proportion as the old man dies, the new man is quickened. As pride loses its influence, humility, by the grace of God the Holy Spirit, succeeds; as wrath yields, meekness advances; as covetousness is done away, trust in God is increased; and as the love of the world is removed, the love of God takes its place in the soul, and becomes more and more vigorous and ardent. In this consists the renovation of the new man. This is the fruit of the Spirit; this is practical and living faith (Gal. 5: 22); this is Christ in us; this is the new command of Christ and new obedience; this is the result of the new birth in us, in which thou must live if thou desirest to be a child of God; for those only who so live have a right to be so called.

4. This is the reason why a man ought now to deny himself; to renounce his own honor and will, his own love and pleasure, and all his profit and interest in the world; and why he ought freely to give up his own right and life, and consider himself unworthy of everything that Providence bestows upon him. A real Christian, who is endued with the humility of Christ, readily owns that no man

can lay claim to even the least of those benefits that descend from above, because they are all gifts, and freely proceed from the goodness of God. On this account he uses all as being really the property of God, with fear and trembling: not to promote his own pleasure and satisfaction, his own profit and praise, but from necessity alone, and because he cannot otherwise subsist.

5. Let a true Christian who denies himself, and a false Christian who is filled with inordinate self-love, be compared together. If an affront be offered to the latter, you may soon behold his anger rising, and visible marks of passion and discontent; and these are, not unfrequently, followed up by reproachful language and actions, by a spirit of revenge, and sometimes by imprecations and curses. All this proceeds from the *old man*, whose proper character it is to be angry and bitter, and to exhibit rancor and asperity. On the contrary, he that is a Christian indeed, and has sincerely begun to practice self-denial, is gentle, patient, and ready to forgive; free from a revengeful spirit; full of compassion and tenderness; and esteems himself worthy of all the sufferings which Providence may be pleased to allot to him. These qualities are all included in *self-denial.*

6. In the exercise of this patience, meekness, and lowliness of mind, our Lord Jesus Christ has set us an example by willingly denying himself. "The Son of man," he says, "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister" (Matt. 20 : 28); and again, "I am among you as he that serveth" (Luke 22 : 27); and in another place, "The Son of man hath not where to lay his head." Luke 9 : 58. David, when reviled by Shimei, practised the duty of self-denial, for his words were: "The Lord hath said unto him, Curse David." 2 Sam. 16 : 10. As if he had said: "I am a worm in the sight of God, and deserve to suffer far worse things." And thus have all the saints and prophets of God freely denied their own will, and esteemed themselves unworthy of every blessing. They bore the burden of their day with patience (Acts 5 : 40, 41); they cursed not when they were cursed; they blessed their persecutors, and prayed for them by whom they were slaughtered (Acts 7 : 60); and thus, "through much tribulation, entered into the kingdom of God." Acts 14 : 22.

7. This was true when they acknowledged themselves unworthy of any favor, but worthy of all the evils that could befall them.

8. Now, this self-denial is the cross of Christ, which he has encouraged us to bear, saying: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily, and follow me." Luke 9 : 23. This self-denying life is a severe cross to the flesh; the natural man desires a life free from restraint and contradiction, and would follow the inclination of his own will, and seek after his own ease and pleasure, rather than the humility, patience, and meekness of Christ, with the other graces of his life and example.

9. But whatever opposition *the old man may* raise for a time, he has received the sentence of death, and if thy soul be ever saved, he must surely die. For never canst thou be clothed with the humility of Christ unless thy natural pride be first subdued; nor canst thou feel a love of his poverty unless thy avarice and thy love of the world be first overcome. Thou wilt not be able to follow Christ in the contempt of vainglory, nor to en-

dure the reproach of his cross, until thine ambition be rooted out; nor wilt thou ever express in thy life the meekness and patience of Jesus until thy revengeful spirit be inwardly mortified.

10. These are the spiritual exercises which the Scriptures mean when they speak of *denying ourselves*, of *bearing the cross of Christ*, and of *following him*,—exercises that are submitted to, not with any expectation of profit, merit, reward, interest, or praise, but from pure love to the Saviour, and because Christ hath passed through all this before us, and "hath left us an example that we should follow his steps." Since the image of God is the greatest dignity of man, we ought the more earnestly to practise the duty of self-denial, by which that image, effaced by sin, is revived within us. And as this is the highest honor of which our nature is susceptible, so is it the strongest inducement that can possibly be suggested to endear to us the practice of self-denial.

11. Why, then, should man so eagerly desire the fading honors of this world, which, however they may raise him in the estimation of his fellow-mortals, render him in no degree more acceptable in the sight of God. The great and the wise have bodies composed of flesh and blood as the meanest and the most despised; so that, in this respect, no man has the slightest superiority over another. One is born even as the other, and dies even as the other; for the beginning and end of all men, as to this world, is alike. What folly then is it to covet worldly honors and the praise of men! Such desires spring from the root of self-love, that bane of the soul, that seed of all spiritual diseases, by which the heart of man is turned from God to the world, and from Christ to *self*. How incapable and how backward is the lover of himself to obey the words of the blessed Redeemer, and to lose his life for His sake that he may save it. This is a paradox hostile to the inclinations of the "old nature," and therefore but little considered by the bulk of mankind.

12. Alas! how small is the number of those who have a thorough knowledge of the depraved life of the old Adam, or who heartily strive against it! And yet, if ever we would rescue our souls from perdition, we must die to it and to all its restless workings. Whatever corruptions have been entailed on us by Adam, must be removed in Christ. In his humility, our pride and ambition must expire; in beholding his poverty, our thirst after earthly things must die away. The contemplation of his bitter sufferings should subdue our sensual lusts; the reproaches which he endured, and the entire resignation with which he submitted to the contempt of the world, should restrain us from the pursuit of worldly honors, and from the indulgence of anger and passion.

13. He who is thus dead to himself, will also readily die to the world, its pomps, and wealth, and honors, and pleasures, solacing himself with those higher riches, dignities, and enjoyments, to which he is admitted by faith in Christ. He becomes, indeed, "a stranger upon the earth" (Ps. 39 : 12), but he is the friend of Christ, and Christ will comfort his heart with the light of his countenance here, and with joy everlasting and unutterable in the world to come.

CHAPTER XVI.

A CONFLICT IS CONSTANTLY MAINTAINED IN THE CHRISTIAN BETWEEN THE SPIRIT AND THE FLESH.

I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind.—Rom. 7 : 23.

THE two opposite principles in the heart of the real Christian, are spoken of by the apostle under different names, viz.: *the inward and outward man* (2 Cor. 4 : 16), the *law of the mind* and the *law of the members* (Rom. 7 : 23), and the *flesh and spirit.* "The flesh," says he, "lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh." Gal. 5 : 17.

2. When the Spirit conquers the flesh, then man lives in the new nature, and is in God and in Christ: but when the flesh vanquishes the Spirit, and thus gains the ascendency, then man lives in the devil and in the old nature; he is under the dominion of the world, and without the kingdom of God, and, consequently, is called *carnal.* And "to be carnally minded is death." Rom. 8 : 6.

3. It is according to the predominance of either of these principles (the flesh and the Spirit), that a man obtains his name in Scripture, and is called *carnal* or *spiritual.* When the flesh and its sensual lusts are subdued, it is an indication of the strength of the spirit, and of a man's proficiency in the inward life; but if a man be vanquished by the flesh, it betrays the weakness both of his faith and spirit.

4. Solomon says, "He that ruleth his spirit (his mind), is better than he that taketh a city." Prov. 16 : 32. If, then, thou desirest to be a valiant conqueror, and to gain an immortal victory, conquer thyself; subdue thy passions, mortify thy pride, quell thine ambition, and destroy every inordinate lust with which thou art assailed; and thus shalt thou overthrow the kingdom of Satan, who, by means of such sins, ruleth in the world. Many have signalized themselves by the capture of towns and cities; but, alas! how few are they who, in a higher sense, may be denominated *conquerors of the world!*

5. If thou yieldest too far to the flesh, thou destroyest thy soul. It is surely better that the soul overcome, and that the body also be preserved, than that, the body overcoming, both body and soul should be destroyed together.

6. This contest, though attended with various trials and difficulties, will, however, issue in a glorious victory and a heavenly crown: "Be thou faithful unto death," saith the Captain of our salvation, "and I will give thee a crown of life." Rev. 2 : 10. And the disciple that lay in his bosom tells us, "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." 1 John 5 : 4. Thou wilt say, What is it to overcome the world? We answer, It is the world within us, which is here principally meant. Overcome thy *self*, and then the victory over the world is thine.

7. Some may, perhaps, be here ready to inquire, "What, if sin sometimes closely beset me, and bear me away against my will; must I be excluded

from the number of God's children, according to that saying of St. John, 'He that committeth sin is of the devil'?" 1 John 3:8. To this it must be replied: If thou feelest the conflict of the Spirit against the flesh, and art grieved that thou sometimes doest things which thou wouldst not, it is an evidence that, amidst the infirmities which encompass thee, thy faith and thy spirit struggle against the flesh, and are opposed to it. St. Paul himself teaches us that this warfare has place even in godly and believing souls, when he says, "I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind (that is, against the new, inward man), and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members" (Rom. 7:23); thus causing him sometimes to do the things which he would not. To will, was present with him; but to perform the good which he would, he was not always able; inasmuch as he could not do of himself the good which he would, while to do the evil which he would not, was always easy to him. Hence he exclaims, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Rom. 7:24. And to this agrees what Christ himself says: "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." Matt. 26:41; Mark 14:38.

8. As long, therefore, as this *conflict* is felt in man, sin cannot be said to *rule* in him; for he who is continually fighting against sin, resists its struggles for dominion; and sin cannot destroy the man who opposes the attempts which it makes upon the soul.

9. It is the experience of all the saints, that they alike have sin, according to the word of St. John: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves." 1 John 1:8. It is not, however, the *indwelling* sin that condemns a man, but the *reigning* sin. The sin with which we contend, and to the commission of which we do not consent, is not imputed to us; as St. Paul says: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Rom. 8:1); that is, who do not permit the flesh to rule. But as for those who are altogether strangers to this spiritual strife, this combat of the flesh and Spirit, they are not born again, but are under the *reigning* influence of sin; they remain the servants of sin and Satan, and are, consequently, damned; for "the law of the Spirit of life" hath not made them "free from the law of sin and death" (Rom. 8:2), so long as they thus suffer sin to rule over them, and to "reign in their mortal body."

10. All this is illustrated in Josh. 16:10. The remnant of the Canaanites were permitted to dwell amongst the children of Israel, but not to have dominion over them; and thus the Israel of God feel their remaining imperfections, but do not allow them to gain the pre-eminence. To preserve this pre-eminence is the duty of the new man in Christ, whose name is Israel (that is, *a prince of God*) (Gen. 32:28); and who, as a *prince*, hath power with God, and shall at last prevail.

11. This daily strife with the old man, is an encouraging evidence of the existence of the new man; for it plainly indicates that there are two contending principles in him who is the subject of it. The strength of the spirit and the victory succeeding it, demonstrate the true Israelite; and the warfare of the spirit indicates the real Christian. The land of Canaan

cannot indeed be gained without war: but when the flesh, like the Canaanite of old, invades the territories of the spirit, it then becomes the part of the spiritual and true Israel not to submit to such a master; but, after true repentance and remission of sin, to collect new strength in Christ, and by the grace of God to rise again from his fall, and earnestly implore Jesus, our true Joshua, to vanquish for him and in him, the spiritual Canaanite, the enemy of his soul. When this is accomplished, the sinner is not only forgiven and restored to favor, but he is likewise refreshed and strengthened in Christ, his great Captain in this spiritual combat. With regard, therefore, to such as continue to feel many infirmities in the flesh, and who cannot do the things which they would, I exhort them to cleave to Jesus as sincere penitents, and to cover their blemishes with his perfect obedience. It is in this order, and in this order alone, that the imputation of Christ's merits becomes salutary and effectual; that is, when a man forsakes his sin, and by daily repentance strives against it; repairs his former losses, and guards against future temptations. But while the sinner remains a stranger to brokenness of heart on account of transgression; while he continues to gratify the unholy propensities of the flesh, nothing can be more absurd than for him to suppose that the merits of Christ are imputed to him; for how can the blood of Christ benefit him who treads it under foot? Heb. 10 : 29.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE INHERITANCE AND POSSESSIONS OF CHRISTIANS ARE NOT OF THIS WORLD; THEY SHOULD, THEREFORE, REGARD THEMSELVES AS STRANGERS IN IT, WHILE THEY MAKE USE OF EARTHLY THINGS.

We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment, let us be therewith content.—1 Tim. 6 : 7, 8.

THE design of the blessed God in creating temporal things, was that they might supply man's bodily wants; and it is right that they should be used for such a purpose, and be received at the hands of God with gratitude, attended with fear and trembling. In regard to those things which are not absolutely necessary, whether gold and silver, food and raiment, etc., they are left to man in order to *prove* him; so that from the manner in which he employs these objects, it may be discovered how he stands affected towards God, while possessed of the goods of this world: whether, on the one hand, he will still cleave to God, and in the midst of earthly possessions, keep his eye constantly fixed on those which are to come; or whether, withdrawing his love from God, he will attach himself to this fleeting world, and prefer a fading earthly paradise, to that which is permanent and heavenly.

2. Man is therefore left to his own

liberty and choice, in order that he may be judged hereafter according to that which he has chosen here, and thus be without excuse in that day. Agreeably to this principle, it was the solemn declaration of Moses to the people of Israel: "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live." Deut. 30 : 19.

3. The things of this world are then designed, not to fill us with earthly delight and pleasures, but to be tests and trials of our fidelity. In these trials the fall is very easy, when once we begin to withdraw from God. The pleasures of this world are the fruits of a forbidden tree; of which we are warned by God not to eat, lest our minds going out after them should eventually take delight in them, after the manner of those who know no other pleasures, but such as are derived from earthly objects. These persons, by indulging the flesh, convert meat, drink, and apparel into snares by which they are turned away from God.

4. It certainly is the duty of every true Christian, to esteem himself a stranger and pilgrim in this world; and as bound to use earthly blessings, not as means of satiating lust or gratifying wantonness, but of supplying his absolute wants and necessities. We ought not to set our affections on these inferior objects, but on Him alone who is able to satisfy them. To do otherwise, is to expose ourselves to dangerous temptations, and with Eve, to eat daily of the forbidden tree. The real Christian is not intent upon worldly concerns, or delicious fare; for his interior eye is directed to that bread which endureth unto eternal life. Nor is he solicitous about fine and fashionable apparel; aspiring rather after robes of divine light, and the raiment of glorified bodies. In short, all things that please the natural man in this world, are, to a true Christian, only so many crosses and temptations, allurements of sin and snares of death, that continually exercise his virtue. Whatever man uses without the fear of God, whatever he applies to the mere gratifying of his flesh, cannot fail to operate as a poison to the soul, however pleasant and salutary it may appear to be to the body. Yet, so far from laboring to know the forbidden tree of worldly pleasures and its various fruits, man gives himself up to a careless and thoughtless state of life, and yields to the lust of the flesh, not considering that this lust is really *the forbidden tree.*

5. The Christian, on the other hand, uses all things in the fear of God, and as a stranger and pilgrim on the earth; avoiding every kind of excess in meat, drink, apparel, houses, and the other things of this life, lest, by an improper use of them, he should offend both his Father in heaven, and his fellow-Christians upon earth. He will not so much as gaze on the *forbidden tree*, in order that he may not be ensnared; but with the eye of faith, he steadfastly beholds the future felicity of the soul, and for the sake of this felicity, refuses to yield to the cravings of corrupt nature. What does it profit the body that in this world it swims in lusts and pleasures, when, after a short period, it must be devoured by worms, and stripped of all its enjoyments! "Naked," says Job, "came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither." Job 1 : 21. We bring into the world

a naked and infirm, a poor and indigent body; and even this is the spoil of death; for when we pass out of this world we leave it behind us forever.

6. Whatever we enjoy from the time of our birth to the period of our dissolution, is all the bread of mercy and affliction, and designed to supply the bare wants of this mortal life. At the approach of death all is taken from us again, and we depart out of the world poorer than when we entered it. When man enters the world, he brings with him life and a body, and finds the necessary shelter, meat, and drink provided for him; but, after existing a short time, he is, in a moment, bereft of all, and leaves behind him even his body and his life. Consider then, O man! whether there can be anything more wretched and poor, more naked and miserable, than man when he dies, if he be not clothed with Christ's righteousness, and enriched in his God.

7. As, therefore, we are confessedly strangers and pilgrims here, and at the hour of dissolution must leave behind us every earthly enjoyment, let us, at least, cease to encumber our souls with things which we cannot carry out of this world, and the use of which is restricted to this life only. Is it not a species of madness to heap up riches for a frail body, for a body which we must leave behind us, and which cannot possibly enjoy wealth hereafter? Luke 12 : 20, 21. Are we ignorant that there is another and a better world, another body and another life, and that, whatever we may appear in the sight of men, we are in the eye of God only strangers and sojourners on the earth? Ps. 39 : 12; Lev. 25 : 23. "Ye are," saith the Lord, "strangers and sojourners *with me*," that is, "*before my eyes*, although ye may not remember it."

8. If, then, we are strangers and sojourners, it follows that our country and our home must be elsewhere. This will be most evident to us, if we compare time with eternity, the visible with the invisible world, the earthly tabernacle with the heavenly, and things that are frail and perishing, with those that are lasting and eternal. Such a comparison will afford us a due insight into time and eternity, and lead us to behold with the eye of faith, such things as remain altogether unknown to the unthinking multitude. It is from the want of this consideration, that so many become lax and disorderly in their manners, wallow in the mire of earthly pleasures, and drown themselves in avarice and worldly cares. It is from the want of this reflection, that the major part of mankind, however keen and shrewd in the pursuits of this world, are blind and insensible to the concerns of the immortal soul. They addict themselves so much to this life, as to esteem it to be the most delightful, the best and noblest of all; while the true Christian, on the contrary, accounts it an exile, a vale of tears, a place of misery, a deep and dark prison.

9. Hence it is that those who love this world, and seek their happiness in it, do not excel even the brute creation in wisdom or understanding; and as they live, so they die like beasts. Ps. 49 : 12, 20. They are totally blind as it respects the inward man; they do not even think of heavenly and eternal things; they never rejoice in God, but only in the low and sordid pleasures afforded by this world. It is in earthly things that they seek their rest and their enjoyment; and having obtained their object after much labor and toil, they sit quietly down and congratulate them-

selves on their possessions. Wretched, miserable men! blind and insensible to the tremendous concerns of their eternal salvation! here, they lie contentedly in the darkness of ignorance, soon to remove hence to that of death and damnation. Luke 1 : 79.

10. In order to our better acquaintance with the nature of our pilgrimage here, we should unceasingly consider the example left us by the Redeemer, and earnestly follow him both in his life and doctrine. He hath set us an unerring pattern of universal holiness. He is our captain and our guide; and to his life and manners, our lives and our manners should be conformed. Go thou, therefore, and look unto him; unto him who, when the greatest of all men, voluntarily chose that life in which nothing of greatness appeared; a life of meanness, poverty, and contempt of honor, wealth, and pleasure, the threefold deity of this world. All these things, to which the world offers sacrifice, the Lord contemned; for he himself said, "He had not where to lay his head." Matt. 8 : 20.

11. Such, likewise, was the character of David; who, before his exaltation to the throne, was poor and despised; and who, when created king, accounted all his regal splendor as nothing compared with eternal life, and the kingdom of God, to which he was called. "How amiable," says he, "are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God." —"A day in thy courts is better than a thousand." Ps. 84. As if he had said, I possess indeed a kingdom, and have people subject to my sway; I possess kingly palaces, and the strong hold of Zion; but what are all these in comparison of thy tabernacle, O Lord of hosts? So, too, Job found comfort in his *Redeemer*. Job. 19 : 25.

12. Neither Peter, nor Paul, nor any of the apostles, sought the riches of this life, but directed their attention to those which were laid up in another and better world. Hence they freely espoused the despised life of Christ, walking in his charity, lowliness, and patience; contemning the earth, and triumphing over the world, its snares, and its allurements. They prayed for those who cursed them; they thanked those who reproached them; they blessed those who reviled them. 1 Cor. 4 : 12; Acts 5 : 41. When they were persecuted, they glorified God; when scourged, they were immovably patient, professing that "through much tribulation they must enter into the kingdom of God" (Acts 14 : 22); and when slaughtered, they prayed (with Christ their Head), "Father, forgive them" (Luke 23 : 34); "lay not this sin to their charge." Acts 7 : 60. Thus were they, on the one hand, dead to all wrath and revenge; to bitterness, ambition, and pride; to the love of the world, and of their own life also; while, on the other, they lived in Christ and in his love, in his meekness and humility, his patience and his resignation. They are, indeed, made alive in Christ by faith, who thus live.

13. To a lover of the world, this excellent way of life is unknown; for with regard to those who do not live in Christ, nor know that the *truth* is in him, these are still dead in their sins; dead in wrath and hatred, in envy and avarice, in pride and revenge; and as long as they so continue, they are in a state of impenitence, and have not been quickened by faith in Jesus, be their boasting

what it may. But the genuine disciples of Christ know it to be a duty to follow the steps of their divine Master (1 Pet. 2:21), and to be conformed to his life, as the supreme and original pattern of all virtue and goodness. In a word, the life of Christ is their exemplar; he himself is their *book*, whence they derive all solid and substantial learning, as it respects both life and doctrine. Such persons declare with the apostle, "We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." 2 Cor. 4:8. And with holy men of old they unite in saying, "Here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come." Heb. 13:14.

14. If, then, from a review of all these considerations, it evidently appear, as it surely does, that in this world we are strangers and have no abiding place, it follows that we were not created for the sake of earthly things as the ultimate end of our being; but that there remain for us another country and other dwellings, to gain which we ought not to hesitate to sacrifice a hundred worlds, or even life itself. These are subjects upon which the true Christian continually meditates with pleasure; and it is his joy that here he has no continuing city, but is created for life eternal. But how sad is the state of those who, occupied wholly in pursuing the things of this life, lade their souls with a crushing weight of worldly vanities, and thereby expose them to endless perdition

CHAPTER XVIII.

SHOWING HOW GREATLY GOD IS OFFENDED, WHEN MAN PREFERS THINGS THAT ARE TEMPORAL TO THOSE THAT ARE ETERNAL; AND HOW GREAT THE EVIL IS, WHEN OUR AFFECTIONS CLEAVE TO THE CREATURE AND NOT TO THE CREATOR.

And the anger of the Lord was kindled; and the fire of the Lord burnt among them, and consumed them, etc.—Numb. 11:1.

MANY there are, in our day, who, under cover of religion, seek after earthly and carnal things; who use more diligence to become great and affluent by the gospel, than to be good and happy. They love "the praise of men, more than the praise of God." John 12:43. They choose rather to gratify the flesh in its sinful propensities, than to bring it down into true repentance and brokenness of spirit. But the character of the true Christian is of an opposite kind. He is more concerned about eternal than temporal things; he seeks the glory that endureth, more than that which passeth away; he thirsts after heavenly and invisible riches, and not after those that are earthly and visible. In short, he mortifies and crucifies the flesh, in order that the spirit may live.

2. The sum of Christianity is *to follow Christ.* Hence, it should be our chief care to imitate the example

which he has left us. Our thoughts and actions, our desires and labors, should all terminate in the attainment of this *one thing needful*, how we may come to Christ; how be saved by, and united with him to all eternity.

3. Never should we cease to consider that endless felicity to which we are called; but cheerfully await the dissolution of our earthly bodies, and a translation to that inheritance which is reserved in heaven for us.

4. By these means, which habituate the soul more and more to the presence of God, there is begotten in man a holy thirst after eternal things; while a desire after earthly objects, which is insatiable in its nature, is at the same time powerfully restrained. This is taught by St. Paul in that precious saying: "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him." Col. 3:17.

5. The *name* of God, in which all things are to be done, is the honor, praise, and glory of God. Ps. 48:10. To this great end of human life, all our works should tend; for then it is that they are wrought in God (John 3:21), and will follow us into a blessed eternity. Rev. 14:13.

6. In a word, Almighty God, our chief and sovereign Good should be the *principle* and *end* of all our designs, if we would not fail of eternal salvation. Hence St. Paul says, "But thou, O man of God, flee these things" (1 Tim. 6:11); namely, covetousness and the love of the world. He calls the Christian, "a man of God," because he is born of God, and lives in God, and therefore is the son and heir of God; as, on the other hand, a man of the world, is one who lives in conformity to the world, who "has his portion in this life, and whose belly is filled with the hid treasure" of the earth. Psal. 17:14. From these snares the Christian is required carefully to flee, and to follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness; and to lay hold on eternal life, whereunto he is called.

7. When a man refuses to be guided by these salutary maxims, he falls of necessity into every kind of enormous and presumptuous sin, and will at last be punished with eternal fire. See, for an illustration, Numb. 11:1.

8. Inundations and war, famine, pestilence, and conflagrations, are, it should be remembered, punishments inflicted by God, on account of our preferring things temporal to things eternal; and because we are more careful of a weak and perishing body, than we are of an imperishable, immortal soul. All this betrays the highest ingratitude, and an open contempt of the blessed God, deserving to be visited with punishments, both here and hereafter. For, does not man by such conduct set aside an almighty, eternal Being, from whom he derives both his body and his soul; and convert an impotent creature into an idol, to which he surrenders his love and affection? He who loves the creature more than the Creator, and things transitory more than those which are eternal, offers surely the highest possible affront to his Maker, and opposes the great design of the Christian religion.

9. It is no doubt true, that all the creatures of God are good in themselves; but when men begin to set their affections on them, and by their irregular love to convert them, as it were, into idols, they then become an abomination in the sight of God, and are justly ranked among the most odious images of gold and silver.

10. What else can result from a

carnal love of the world but hell and damnation! Consider the case of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19:24), and the one in Numb. 11:1, already mentioned. These are illustrations of the eternal fire and damnation which must follow a rejection of God.

11. The love and joy, the wealth and honors of the true Christian, are circumscribed only by eternity itself; for, "where his *treasure* is, there will his *heart* be also." Luke 12:34. From the lust and love of the world, on the contrary, nothing can result but eternal damnation. "The world passeth away and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever" (1 John 2:17): and hence, St. John calls upon the faithful entirely to withdraw their affections from the world; saying, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world." 1 John 2:15. These and similar considerations powerfully convince us, that God will not permit us to fix our affections on any creature whatsoever.

12. But this will more fully appear from the following reflections:

I. Love is the very *heart* of a man, and the noblest of all his affections; hence, it is due to God only, as the supreme object, and sovereign Good.

II. It is absolute folly to love temporal things, which cannot love us; whereas the infinitely blessed God deserves to be loved alone, since from a pure principle of love, he created us unto eternal life, and hath, to the same purpose, redeemed and sanctified us.

III. *Like* things are naturally loved by their *like*. Hence, God made us after his own image, in order that we might love Him; and that, next to himself, we might love our neighbor, created after the same image.

IV. The human soul resembles a mirror, representing every object indifferently that is placed before it, whether it be of heaven or of earth. Therefore turn thy soul wholly and only to God, that this image may be fully expressed in it.

V. The patriarch Jacob, when dwelling in Mesopotamia, far removed from his native soil, never abandoned his purpose to return, and, at length, after twenty years' service, demanded his wives and wages; and, cheered by the recollection of the place of his nativity, returned thither. So should thy soul, amidst the various engagements of this life, and the hurry of outward employments, long without ceasing after thy heavenly fatherland.

VI. Man is made either better or worse by that which he loves. He that loves God, partakes freely of the divine virtue and goodness that reside in Him; but he that loves the world, is defiled with all those sins and evils which attend it.

VII. When King Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 4:33) was too much controlled by the love of the world, he lost the very form of a man, and degenerated into that of a beast. So all men, blotting from their hearts the image and love of God, are transformed, as it respects their inward man, into the nature of brutes. For surely those who wholly surrender themselves to the love of this world, are no better.

VIII. Lastly, that which a man has loved here, and carried about in his heart, shall be manifested in him hereafter; and with this he shall associate himself forever, whether it be God or the world. If the world have been the object of his love in this life, it will never leave him hereafter, but will prove his death and his tormentor to all eternity.

CHAPTER XIX.

HE WHO IS MOST OF ALL CONSCIOUS OF HIS MISERY, IS MOST OF ALL ACCEPTABLE TO GOD; AND HIS CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE OF HIS MISERY, URGES HIM TO SEEK THE GRACE OF GOD.

To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.—ISAIAH 66 : 2.

THESE comfortable words, our gracious and merciful God hath spoken by the prophet, in order to cheer our hearts, when they are most oppressed with misery and sorrow. Be not thou therefore ashamed to be bruised in spirit, and abased in thine own eyes. Humble thyself in the dust, and deem thyself unworthy of all grace and favor; so shalt thou be raised out of thine own vileness, and obtain, in Christ, acceptance with Almighty God.

2. He who is still *something* in his own estimation, is not duly humbled and depressed in his heart; nor can he expect to be regarded by that Being who looks upon the poor and contrite ones only. "If," says the apostle, "a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself" (Gal. 6 : 3): and the reason of this is, that God is *all in all*, alone; and the creature must consequently become a bare and empty *nothing*. So great and so practical is this truth, that man is not only to believe it in his heart, but to express it in his life and conduct.

3. If ever thou designest, then, to give all glory and all honor to God, that HE may be ALL, alone, thou must surely thyself become *nothing* in thine own eyes; and entertain a very low opinion of thyself, and of thy profiting in spiritual things. For how is it possible that God should be *all in all*, whilst thou thyself continuest to be *something?* By this self-exaltation thou invadest the sovereignty of God, and appropriatest that to thyself, which is his proper due and prerogative. "It was *before the Lord*," said David to Michal, who had reproached him, "and I will yet be more vile than thus, and will be base in mine own sight." 2 Sam. 6 : 21, 22.

4. A man that will be *something*, is the matter out of which God is wont to make *nothing;* but he, on the contrary, who loves to be reputed as nothing, and who, in his own judgment, is so, is the matter out of which the Almighty maketh *something*. He that will be wise in his own opinion, is the matter out of which God maketh a fool; and he who is truly sensible of his own folly and nothingness, is that of which God forms a wise and great man. He who, before the Lord, sincerely confesses himself to be the greatest and most miserable of sinners, is, in the sight of God, the first and greatest of all men. He who believes himself to be the chief of *sinners*, shall be honored by the Lord as the chief of *saints*. Matt. 23 : 12; Luke 1 : 52.

5. This is that humility which God exalts; that misery which he regards; that *nothing* from which he createth *something*. And as, at the creation, the glorious frame of heaven and earth was

brought forth out of *nothing*, so must man be reduced to a deep sense of his vileness and nothingness, if ever he be exalted to glory and to dignity.

6. Reflect upon the example of David, whose misery God beheld, and to whom he granted the richest gifts of his grace. Consider, again, the example of Jacob, who confessed, "I am not worthy of the least of all thy mercies." Gen. 32:10.

7. But above all, lay to heart the example of Christ, the grand and blameless pattern of a Christian. He was abased below the meanest of men; was made a worm and a curse for our sake (Ps. 22:6), despised and rejected of men. Isaiah 53:3. But the lower he sunk, the higher did he afterwards rise, when he received a name which is above every name.

8. But who is that blessed and lowly one who is *nothing* in his own eyes? It is he who inwardly and in his heart esteems himself worthy of no divine benefit, whether bodily or spiritual. For he that arrogates anything to himself, esteems himself to be *something;* and is, therefore, the farthest removed from divine grace and from this new creation. So destructive is the spirit of self, that it renders even grace of no effect, and shuts out that which contains all things in it. For if a man judge himself worthy of anything, he then does not take all things as a free gift from the hands of God. Whatever we are, however, is of *grace* and not *merit;* nor can we call anything our own, except our sins, our helplessness, and our misery. All else belongs to God.

9. A man considered in himself, that is, independently of God, by whom he subsists, is no more than a shadow. And as the shadow of a tree constantly conforms to the tree on which it depends, so should man conform to the will of God from whom he has his very life and being; as the apostle says: "In him we live, and move, and have our being." Acts 17:28. It is true, the fruit will sometimes appear in the shadow of the tree; yet it does not therefore belong to the shadow, but to the tree: so all the good fruits that may appear in thy life and conduct, are not the produce of thy own self and thy ability, but of God alone, who is the original source whence all good fruits proceed. And as the apple grows not from that gross substance the wood, which is seen by the eye, but from the seminal virtue which the tree contains, and which is made active from above; so the new man, and the fruit he bears, spring not up from anything that is gross and visible to the eye, but from a supernatural and invisible seed.

10. Now, man is by nature a dry tree; but God is his strength, whereby life is renewed in him, and he himself is made fat and green in the house of God. God is the "strength of our life" (Psal. 27:1), says the Psalmist: and hence we "shall bring forth much fruit whilst we abide in Christ." John. 15:5.

11. When a man is thus wretched and poor in his own eyes, and has nothing in the world in which to trust but the pure grace of God, manifested in Christ Jesus, then God graciously "looks upon him." This divine regard must be understood in a divine sense. The look or countenance of God, is not as the countenance of men, destitute of life and virtue: but it is accompanied with a living power and influence that supports and revives the faint and penitent sinner. And as none but the humble and contrite are capable of

this heavenly regard; so the more fully they receive the consolation which God grants, the less do they think themselves worthy of it. Such a one deems himself unworthy of all blessings divine and temporal. He says with Jacob, "I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth which thou hast shewed unto thy servant:" for behold, since thou gavest me thy Son Jesus Christ, I come with two bands, with the blessings of grace and of glory. Gen. 32:10. And truly, if a man should weep a sea of tears, it were by no means sufficient to purchase or deserve the least part of heavenly comfort: the grace of God cannot be merited by men, who deserve nothing but wrath and eternal damnation.

12. Whoever thus acquaints himself in faith with his own misery, is truly one of those poor and contrite men, to whom the Lord graciously looks. Without this previous brokenness of heart, man cannot expect to enjoy this blessed aspect of God, nor indeed that grace and kindness which is promised to the poor in spirit only. In this weakness and poverty the apostle glories, when he says: "If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities" (2 Cor. 11:30): and he adds the reason: "that the power of Christ may rest upon me." 2 Cor. 12:9. For so great indeed is the mercy of God, that he will not see the work of his hands destroyed: but the weaker the creature is in itself, the more is it sustained by the power of an Almighty Being. For in the weakness of the creature, the power of God is exalted, as the Lord declared unto Paul: "My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness."

13. The more vile and miserable therefore a Christian is in his own opinion, the more freely God looks upon him, to the greater manifestation of the riches of his glory. And in bestowing this heavenly consolation, he does not look at all on man's merit, but barely on his want and poverty. And this comfort can in no degree be compared with any human comfort, all which it infinitely exceeds. In such a sense, then, God looks to the contrite man and comforts his spirit.

14. By "the poor and contrite man," is not to be understood, a man that is poor in the outward sense of the word, or who is altogether destitute of human help and relief; but *he* is the poor man, who labors under the load of his sins, and is grieved for them. If sin were not in the world, there could be no misery: but now so much misery cannot befall a man, but that he is still worthy of much more. Ps. 103:10. Far be it therefore from us to grieve, because we have not many temporal benefits conferred upon us; since we are not worthy even of the least of them, no, not of life itself. Our flesh and blood may think this a hard saying; yet every penitent sinner ought to be a severe judge in his own case, and ought not to make the least allowance to his carnal propensities. This is the order in which we are to obtain God's favor and mercy.

15. And what has man now left to boast of, or what language shall he employ when he opens his mouth? The best course he can take will be to say simply, "Lord, I have sinned; have thou mercy upon me!" And, truly, God himself requires no more from a man than that he humbly deplore his sin, and in the unfeigned language of repentance pray for pardon. Whoever neglects this, may be

said to have slighted the best and most needful part of his being, Weep not therefore, O Man! on account of thy *body*, that it is naked and sick, pinched with hunger and cold, insulted and persecuted; or because it is confined by bonds and a prison: but humble thyself before the Lord, and bewail the woful condition of thy *soul*, which is constrained to dwell in so wretched a house as thy body is, a house of sin and death. "O wretched man," says the apostle, "who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Rom. 7 : 24. This free and Christian acknowledgment of thine own inward misery, this godly sorrow, this thirst after divine grace, this faith leaning on Christ alone, open, in Christ, the door of grace, by which God enters into thy soul. "Be zealous, therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand," saith the Lord, "at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me" (Rev. 3 : 20): which supper is nothing else than the remission of sin, attended with heavenly comfort, with life and blessedness. This is the door of faith (Acts 14 : 27), through which the Lord, at the right time, enters into the soul; and after the day of toil and sorrow is over, refreshes her with the light of his countenance. Then it is, that "mercy and truth meet together; righteousness and peace kiss each other; that truth springs out of the earth, and righteousness looks down from heaven." Ps. 85 : 10, 11. Then it is that the woman, that poor sinner, but now a penitent, anoints the feet of her Lord, washes them with tears, and wipes them with the hairs of her head, expressing thereby all the marks of an unfeigned and deep humility. Luke 7 : 37. Then it is, that the spiritual priest (Rev. 1 : 6), in the holy ornaments of faith, offers up the true sacrifice, even a broken and lowly spirit, with the incense of true contrition and prayer. Ps. 51 : 19. Then it is that the true sanctified water of purifying (Numb. 8 : 7) is applied,—the tears which grief for sin caused to flow; and now, through faith and by the power of the blood of Christ, the spiritual Israelite is washed and cleansed.

16. And thus, O Christian! is seen how by the sense of thy own misery, and by faith in Christ attending it, thou mayest attain the grace and favor of God. To conclude, the more wretched and miserable any one is in his own judgment, the more dearly he is beloved of God, and the more gracious is the regard which the Lord will bestow upon him.

CHAPTER XX.

A TRULY CHRISTIAN SORROW FOR SIN PROMOTES THE DAILY AMENDMENT OF THE LIFE OF MAN, MAKES HIM MEET FOR THE KINGDOM OF GOD, AND FITS HIM, IN AN INCREASING DEGREE, FOR ETERNAL LIFE.

Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.—2 COR. 7 : 10.

TRUE Christianity consists solely in pure faith, love, and a holy life. This holiness of life springs from true repentance, sorrow, and self-knowledge; so that a man not only more and more feels his failings and imperfections, but amends them also, and, in this order, partakes of the righteousness and holiness of Christ by faith. 1 Cor. 1 : 30.

2. But in order to regulate the grand work of salvation with the better order and care, thou oughtest now to walk in a submissive and filial fear of God, guarding against all that would gratify the flesh. "All things are lawful," says the apostle, "but all things are not expedient" (1 Cor. 6 : 12); that is, "all things edify not." 1 Cor. 10 : 23. As a dutiful child, confined to the father's house, does not so much as attempt to follow his own humor in everything; but, unwilling to offend his parent, observes his will and pleasure: so a true Christian and child of God will behave himself in his Father's house, in so careful a manner, as not to allow his senses any unlawful liberty. He will neither do nor speak anything without consulting first his Father in heaven, under whose eye he constantly lives, knowing that He is everywhere present.

3. Most men live without any fear of God, freely indulging themselves in worldly pleasures and satisfaction. They will not consider that it is far better to have a constant fear of God fixed in the heart, than a constant joy of the world. For as the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom, and begets a serious frame of mind; so the joy of this world extinguishes all good impressions, and banishes true wisdom out of the heart, together with all godly fear and devotion.

4. By daily repentance and mortification of the flesh, man is daily renewed in God's image; for "though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day" (2 Cor. 4 : 16); and often, in the midst of his sorrows, is he visited with a taste of heavenly joy and sweetness. Whereas, the pleasure and joy of the world are always attended with heaviness of heart, and an inward sting of a wounded conscience. If the people were but more sensible of the melancholy effects resulting from worldly pleasure, and particularly of that damp which it puts upon heavenly comfort, they would certainly dread all loose and worldly enjoyments: since thereby the grace of devotion is quenched, and the soul diverted from those purer pleasures which the Gospel of Christ affords.

5. There are two things which prevent those who seriously consider them from being influenced either by worldly pleasures or outward calam-

ities. The one is, *the eternal pain of the damned;* whoever earnestly ponders it, will almost find it impossible to be thoroughly merry after the way of the world. The other is, *the eternal joy of the blessed in heaven.* Whoever has a sound apprehension of so happy a state, will never be greatly moved with the calamities of the present life; and this arises from the consideration of the eternity of those divine enjoyments. But so great is the levity of our hearts, that it hinders us from any serious reflection on so important a subject. And hence it is no wonder that we are both without this wholesome contrition and sorrow, and ignorant of all celestial joys and comforts.

6. It is the prerogative of a true Christian to be, on the one hand, but sparingly, if at all, moved with earthly things, or temporal advantages; and, on the other, to be the more deeply impressed with the joys of God, and of life eternal. Neither is he immoderately dejected in the present adversities that may befall him; but the loss of the soul grieves him to his very heart, and he counts it worthy of long lamentation. As for the perishing comfort of this life, he knows it cannot be called a loss, since he shall receive a thousand-fold for it in the world to come. But when a soul is once cast away, it can never be restored.

7. Blessed is the man who is affected with godly sorrow, and tastes that celestial consolation which succeeds it. But, alas! how much of our time do we spend in worldly joy and merriment, when we have greater reason to bewail our own misery and that of others! There is no true liberty, no solid delight, no substantial satisfaction, but in the fear of God, and in a quiet, serene conscience. But this blessing can never exist without faith, and without a holy life and conversation. This faith, attended with godly sorrow, daily proceeds more and more to correct our faults and imperfections. Whoever neglects this daily reform of his life and manners, wastes the most precious part of his time, which he should employ to secure the interest of his immortal soul. He is an adversary to the new life; he hinders the kingdom of God in himself; and he can never be cured of the blindness and hardness of his heart, so long as he remains in that state.

8. It follows, therefore, that he only deserves the name of a prudent and wise man, who carefully avoids whatever he understands to be an obstacle to the reforming of his life, and to the improving of himself in heavenly gifts and graces. Happy is he who not only avoids such things as are detrimental to his body and estate, but also detests those which hinder the soul in her spiritual progress.

9. Be therefore courageous, O Man, and endure hardness as a good soldier of Christ! 2 Tim. 2 : 3. An evil habit of mind must be overcome with a good one. It is the apostle's exhortation : " Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." Rom. 12 : 21. The cure of thy soul is not impossible. View, in the first place, thy own corruptions, and judge them severely, before thou presumest to censure the faults of thy neighbor. Be not too forward in admonishing and correcting others; but endeavor to heal first thy evils at home, before thou enterest upon the reforming of those that are abroad.

10. Go on, therefore, O Christian, and learn the lesson of daily repentance, sorrow, and contrition of heart. If the world despise thee upon that account, and decry this wholesome

exercise as error and as melancholy, be not concerned at such poor and empty reflections. Grieve rather that thou art called indeed a Christian, but that thou hast not yet arrived at that strictness of life and purity of manners, which the Gospel requires. Bear the contempt of the world with Christian constancy, and consider the singular benefit which thence accrues to the whole practice of true religion. For, if thou be scorned by the world, then God is ready to support thee by fresh supplies of life and comfort, according to his own declaration: "I dwell in the high and holy place; with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." Isa. 57 : 15.

11. It is impossible that divine and worldly joy should, at one and the same time, reside in the heart of man; so very contrary are they to each other, and so inconsistent in their natures, causes, and effects. The joy of the world is begotten in prosperity; but that which is from heaven, springs up in the midst of crosses and adversities.

12. It is true that it is against the bent of nature to rejoice in the time of adversity, as the apostle himself seems to intimate: "As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things." 2 Cor. 6 : 10. But then it is no less true, that the grace of God cleanses our nature, and qualifies it for such spiritual exercises. And it was after this change that the apostles rejoiced, because they were "counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Christ." Acts 5 : 41.

13. A Christian is become by the grace of God, a new creature, and hence the tribulations of this life are made easy to him. The apostle declared, that he even "gloried in tribulations." Rom. 5 : 3. As affliction is a grievous burden to the old man, so it gives ease and joy to the new man in Christ. Again, that joy which is from above, infinitely surpasses that which is from below. Nay, the very reproach and contempt which a Christian undergoes for the sake of Christ, is attended with a secret satisfaction: and the reason we are so little affected with these heavenly visitations, is on account of the joy of the world, to which we are still too much addicted.

14. A truly humble man thinks himself worthy of all manner of sufferings, and unworthy of any divine comfort: but the more unworthy he thinks himself in true brokenness of spirit, the more is he visited with the goodness of God. And the more he weeps over his sin, the more is he weaned from worldly enjoyments; for the whole world gradually becomes to him a burden and a bitter affliction.

15. A man that seriously views himself and his inward condition, finds more reason to mourn than to rejoice. And when he takes a survey of the lives of others, he will undoubtedly meet with abundance of objects worthy of pity or of compassion, rather than of hatred and envy. Why did Christ weep over Jerusalem, even over that Jerusalem which persecuted and slew him? Luke 19 : 41. Truly their sin and blindness was the evident cause of it. And in this he has also left us a pattern, and with deep feeling taught us, that nothing in the world should more powerfully melt us into tears and compassion, than our own sins, and the impenitence and carnal security which everywhere abound.

16. Did a man as often revolve in his mind, that he must certainly die, and appear before the judgment-seat of God, as he thinks on the concerns of this life, and how to provide for them, surely he would be abundantly more serious in his conversation, more diligent in the reformation of his life, and more fervent in all the duties of repentance. Did he moreover call to mind the unspeakable and eternal torments of hell, succeeding, as they do, a short enjoyment of sin; this consideration would embitter to him the sweets of this world, and in comparison, render all the afflictions of this life, pleasant and easy to him. But alas! the enticements of the flesh are so strong and prevalent, and our compliances in their favor, so forward, that we seldom yield to such serious reflections as these.

17. Upon the whole, this should be a Christian's daily consideration: if his body be pampered in lust and luxury; if the flesh be humored and gratified in its inordinate cravings; then the life of the spirit loses its vigor, and if not seasonably supported, will pine away into death and destruction. Whereas, if the flesh be crucified with its lusts and desires, the spirit lives and gathers strength. One is the death of the other. If, therefore, the spirit shall live in thee, then thy body must be certainly made a spiritual sacrifice (Rom. 12 : 1), and must spiritually die to the world, and to all conformity with it.

18. This has been the constant practice of all the saints, from the beginning of the world until now. They have with thanksgiving eaten and drunk the bread and cup of tears, according to that declaration of David: "Thou feedest us with the bread of tears, and thou givest us tears to drink in great measure." Ps. 80 : 5. And in another Psalm: "My tears have been my meat day and night." Ps. 42 : 3. Again, "I have eaten ashes like bread, and mingled my drink with weeping." Ps. 102 : 9.

19. This has been the "daily bread" of all the saints to this day; yet it has, however, been sweetened to them, *faith* being mixed with it. This is that godly "sorrow which worketh repentance to salvation, not to be repented of." 2 Cor. 7 : 10.

20. But as this godly sorrow is attended with life and happiness, so the "sorrow of the world worketh death" itself. 2 Cor. 7 : 10. This kind of sorrow arises from the loss of honor, of temporal goods and estates, and other things of that nature. This sorrow has proved so fatal to many, that they have laid violent hands on themselves, and procured their own ruin and death by various contrivances. Of this there are not wanting many examples in the history both of Pagans and Christians: though, indeed, the latter ought better to understand the maxims and doctrines of Christ, who has abundantly taught us, not to set our hearts on objects so frail and perishing. For what is the loss of a handful of fading things, to the life of a man, with which all the goods of this world cannot be compared?

21. Be not, therefore, cast down by the loss of temporal goods, which, by the very laws of nature, we can enjoy but a little while: but lay the more to heart those incorruptible riches, that are laid up in the world to come; and do whatever thou canst to prevent the loss of *them*. Death will strip thee at last of all worldly possessions. Here shall be an end of pomp and greatness. This law of death is equally given to all, and the penalty of it at-

taches to all alike. The greatest king is seized on the throne, and the meanest beggar on the dunghill (1 Sam. 2 : 8; Ps. 113 : 7); for as the body of the one is, so is also the body of the other: both putrefy and turn alike to corruption. Nevertheless, the Lord will remove at length the veil of the shadow of death, which is spread over all nations, and will "swallow up death in victory" (Isa. 25 : 8), and "wipe away all tears from our eyes." Rev. 7 : 17; Isa. 25 : 8.

22. Let these and the like considerations, induce thee patiently to bear the loss of earthly things; remembering that the whole world does not come up to the price of one soul, for which Christ vouchsafed to die. The more thou withdrawest thy heart from temporal goods and estates, the less will it affect thee, when thou shalt be obliged one way or other to leave them. Thy grief will undoubtedly be the greater, the more thy love has been wrapped up with them. Thus does the "labor of the foolish weary every one of them" (Eccl. 10 : 15); as the wise man expresseth it.

23. This is the unhappy state into which the children of this world plunge themselves. They hoard and amass their goods with assiduous pain and labor; they possess them with fear and anxiety of mind; and quit them at last with grief and groans, when they can no longer enjoy them. This is the "sorrow of this world," which begets no less an evil than *death* itself.

24. We read, that such as adored the beast "had no rest" (Rev. 14 : 11): so they that adore the great and toilsome beast of sordid and earthly Mammon, may be said to have no rest, day nor night. This description of men, most wretched and most unquiet as they are, may be fitly compared to camels, or mules. These animals, traversing rocks and hills, and carrying gold and silver, silken garments and pearls, spices and wines, draw many attendants with them for their better security: but at night, when they are stabled, all their precious ornaments, their embroidered garments and vestments, are taken from them, and they, being weary and stripped, appear to be what indeed they are, poor and miserable beasts of burden. Nothing is now seen upon them but the prints of their stripes, and the marks of the blows which they received upon the road. So, in like manner, that man who in this world shone in gold and silks, in "purple and fine linen" (Luke 16 : 19), when the day of his death is come, has nothing left but the prints and scars of a wounded conscience, contracted by the abuse of such riches as were committed to his trust.

25. Therefore, O man! learn to relinquish this world, before it relinquishes thee. If thou break not with the world, the world will break with thee, and leave horror and anguish behind it. He who withdraws his soul from the world, before he quits the world with his body, can joyfully die: since he is loosed from the ties which bound him to these inferior objects. As the Israelites, when they were about to leave the land of Egypt, were daily afflicted with greater burdens by Pharaoh, who designed to destroy them, and, if possible, utterly to extirpate their progeny (Exod. 5 : 9); so the infernal Pharaoh, who desires to hinder our eternal salvation, when we are now upon the very borders of life everlasting, still attempts to load us with more of the concerns of this life, and thereby to obstruct our passage into a better world.

26. It is certain that we cannot

carry with us the least dust of all our earthly possessions into the kingdom of heaven. Nay, our very body must be left behind us until the day of resurrection. If we know anything, we know that the way leading to life is so very *strait*, as to strip the soul entirely of anything that will hinder her passage. "Narrow is the way which leadeth to life, and few there be that find it." Matt. 7:14. As the husbandman separates the wheat from the chaff, so death frees the soul from all the chaff and dross of this world, from all riches, and greatness, and worldly attire, which now, like the chaff, are driven away.

27. Go therefore, O man, and seriously ponder in thy mind what the apostle declares: "Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation, not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death." 2 Cor. 7:10.

CHAPTER XXI.

OF THE TRUE WORSHIP OF GOD.

The sons of Aaron offered strange fire before the Lord, and there went out fire from the Lord and devoured them.—Lev. 10:1, 2.

THIS fire is called *strange*, because it was different from that which continually burned upon the altar, and with which, according to the command of God, the burnt-offerings were consumed. It is, therefore, a type of false worship; and the sons of Aaron were destroyed with avenging flames, because they violated the divine precept.

2. This marked displeasure of the jealous and righteous God, is in like manner provoked by those who, from the motion of their own unregenerate mind, and from a singular presumption of devotion or religious sanctity, introduce a new and peculiar worship of God; which, not being enjoined by himself, provokes his indignation, anger, and vengeance; because "God is a consuming fire." Deut. 4:24; Heb. 12:29.

3. In order that *we* may not incur the wrath of the divine majesty, let us consider wherein the true worship of God consists; for the punishment of temporal fire, inflicted on false worship under the *Old* Testament, is to us a proof, that the Lord will also, under the *New* dispensation, take the severest vengeance on all strange worship, not only with everlasting, but also with temporal fire, wars, desolations, and effusion of blood.

4. Now, we can learn wherein the true worship of God consists, when we compare the Old Testament with the New. The ceremonies which the former prescribed, referred typically to the Messiah. Devout Jews saw, as it were, the Messiah from afar, believed on him, and, according to the promise, obtained deliverance from sin and death through him. But our worship, according to the *New* Testament, does

not consist in external ceremonies; we are taught to worship God in spirit and in truth, that is, to believe in Christ, who fulfilled the Law. Thus he redeemed us from the curse of the law (Gal. 3 : 13), and made us free from all Jewish ceremonies (Gal. 5 : 1); so that now, by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, we serve God with a willing heart and mind (Jerem. 31 : 33; Rom. 8 : 14), and our conscience and faith are not bound by human ordinances.

5. To true, spiritual, internal Christian worship, three things belong. 1. The *true knowledge of God.* 2. The *knowledge of sin*, accompanied with unfeigned repentance. And 3. The *knowledge of grace*, attended with remission of sin.

6. The *knowledge of God* consists in faith, which apprehends Christ, and in him, and through him, knows God, his omnipotence, love, mercy, righteousness, truth, wisdom; all which are God himself. For what is God? Surely no other than pure omnipotence, pure love and mercy, pure justice, truth, and wisdom. And the same is to be said of Christ, and of the Holy Spirit.

7. But whatever God is, he is not to himself only, but also *to me*, by his gracious will, made manifest in Christ Jesus. Thus *to me* is God omnipotent; *to me* he is merciful; *to me* eternal righteousness, through faith and remission of sins. *To me*, also, he is everlasting truth and wisdom. Thus it is, also, with Christ. He is made *to me* eternal omnipotence, the almighty Head, and Prince of my life, my most merciful Saviour, everlasting love, unchangeable righteousness, truth, and wisdom; according to the words of the apostle: "Christ is of God made unto us, wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." 1 Cor. 1 : 30. All of which is also true of the Holy Spirit, who is *my* eternal love, righteousness, truth, and wisdom.

8. This is the true knowledge of God, which consists in faith. It is not some empty and speculative science, as people imagine; but a cheerful, lively, and effectual reliance on God, in which I feel the rays and influences of the divine Omnipotence really descending upon me, so that I perceive how I am upheld and preserved by him; how "in him I live, and move, and have my being." Acts 17 : 28. I must also taste the riches of his goodness and mercy. Is not that which the Father, Christ, and the Holy Spirit, have done for thee, for me, and for us all, the effect of pure love? What more perfect and complete righteousness can there be than that, by which he rescues us from sin, hell, death, and the devil? And do not his truth and wisdom most conspicuously appear in all that he has accomplished for us?

9. This, therefore, is the true and substantial faith, which consists in a living and effectual reliance on God, and not in empty words. In this knowledge of God, or faith, we must, as becomes the children of God, make daily advances, and abound more and more. 1 Thess. 4 : 1. Hence the apostle pours out most fervent prayers, "that we may know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge." Eph. 3 : 19. As if he had said, "Though it were the sole care of our lives to learn the depth of the love of Christ, yet would there still remain continual and never-failing matter for further inquiry." Neither is it to be supposed, that this knowledge consists in a barren acquaintance with the universal love of Christ, extending itself over the whole world; but we must also

taste it in our own hearts; we must experience the sweetness and delight, the power and vital influx of this immense kindness displayed in the Word, and embraced by faith. Can he say that he knows the love of Christ, who never tasted its sweetness? Hence it is said of some that were endued with this experimental sense, that they had "tasted of the heavenly gift, and the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come." Heb. 6:4. All this is effected by faith through the Word. The same experience of the divine love is also intimated by the "shedding abroad of the love of God in our hearts by the Holy Ghost." Rom. 5:5. In this consist the fruit and efficacy of the Word of God. And this only is the true knowledge of God, proceeding from experience, and founded on a living faith. For this reason the Epistle to the Hebrews calls our faith a *substance*, and a certain and well-grounded *evidence*. Heb. 11:1. And this knowledge of God, that arises from a living faith, is one part of the inward and spiritual worship of God. In a word, *faith* is a spiritual, living, and heavenly gift; yea, the very light and power of God.

10. When, therefore, this true knowledge of God is attained, by which God offers himself, as it were, to be touched and tasted by the soul, according to that Psalm, "O taste and see that the Lord is good" (Ps. 34:8); it is impossible that a sincere repentance should not immediately ensue; that is, a real renovation of the mind, and reformation of the life. For, from a sense and knowledge of the divine Omnipotence, proceeds *humility;* since he must necessarily submit himself unto the mighty hand of God, who has perceived its irresistible power and energy. From the experience of the divine mercy arises *charity* to our neighbor; for no man can be uncharitable who has ever been affected by a sense of the divine compassion. Who can refuse to lend to his neighbor, that considers that God, from pure mercy, has bestowed himself upon us? From the long-suffering of God, proceeds great *patience* towards our neighbor; so that were it possible that a true Christian could be killed seven times a day, and as many times be restored to life again, yet would he always freely forgive his murderer, and this on account of the boundless mercy of God conferred upon himself. From the divine justice flows the *knowledge of sin*, as the prophet teaches us: "Righteousness belongeth unto thee, O Lord, but unto us confusion of faces." Dan. 9:7. "Enter not into judgment with thy servant, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified." Ps. 143:2. "If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?" Ps. 130:3. From the knowledge of the truth of God, flow *fidelity* and candor towards our neighbor; and all fraud, deceit, lying, and other such sinister practices, are, in consequence, freely abandoned. The sincere Christian reasons thus with himself: "God forbid that I should deal deceitfully with my neighbor; for then I should offend the truth of God, which is God himself; since he has dealt so faithfully with me, it would be the blackest impiety were I to act otherwise by my neighbor." The consideration of the eternal divine wisdom produces the *fear of God.* For whoever knows God to be the Searcher of hearts, viewing the most secret recesses, must necessarily dread the eyes of the divine majesty. "He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? He that formed the eye, shall he not see?" Ps. 94:9.

Therefore, "Woe unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the Lord, and their works are in the dark, and they say, Who seeth us? and who knoweth us? Surely your turning of things upside down shall be esteemed as the potter's clay: for shall the work say of him that made it, He made me not? Or shall the thing framed, say of him that framed it, He had no understanding?" Isa. 29 : 15, 16; see also Jer. 23 : 24, and 32 : 19.

11. From the true *knowledge of God*, arise the *knowledge of sin*, and consequent repentance. This repentance brings renovation of mind, and renovation of mind is accompanied with amendment of life. And this knowledge, together with those things that attend it, makes up the other part of the inward worship of God; and it is that sacred fire which, by the appointment of God, is to be used with the sacrifices, lest his wrath should be kindled against us, and we be consumed by the fire of his vengeance.

12. The injunction of God to the priests, not to drink wine or strong drink when they were about to enter the tabernacle (Lev. 10 : 9), is an illustration of this repentance; and in a *spiritual* sense, it extends itself to all Christians. For if we would enter into the tabernacle of God, even into life everlasting, it is necessary that we should abstain from the lusts of the world and of the flesh, and from all that tends to bring the spirit in bondage to the body. For the love of the world, the love of pleasure, pride, and other vices, are like palatable wine, by which the power of the soul and spirit is clouded, and at last brought under subjection to the flesh. Man, so subjected, is restrained from entering into the tabernacle of God; that is, he cannot arrive at the knowledge and the sanctuary of God; consequently he is deprived of that discerning faculty, which distinguishes between things sacred and profane, clean and unclean; so that he understands nothing of divine and heavenly operations, and therefore is unfit to instruct those in sound doctrine who are committed to his care. His understanding and thoughts are not enlightened from above; but being overcome with the wine of worldly lust, are eventually involved in gross darkness. This repentance, contrition, and grief for sin, and this true faith in Christ, are followed by the *knowledge* of *grace* and *remission of sin;* which, as it proceeds from the merit of Christ only, so the benefit of this merit can be claimed by no man without repentance. Repentance was therefore necessary, even to the thief upon the cross, that his sin being first remitted, he might accompany Christ into paradise. And that his repentance proceeded from a heart affected with a holy contrition, appears from the reproof which he gave his companion: "Dost not thou fear God? We receive the due reward of our deeds; but this man hath done nothing amiss" (Luke 23 : 40), and from the request he addressed to Christ: "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." Verse 24. These are most undeniable proofs of a contrite heart, embracing Christ and his merits by faith.

13. This gracious absolution from sin, which is apprehended in faith by a penitent heart, supplies all those defects under which we labor: but it is entirely the effect of the death and blood of Christ. All our offences are as completely annulled by his abundant satisfaction, as if they had never been committed. The merit of Christ

is of that extent and power, that David exclaims: "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be (not only as white, but even) whiter than snow." Psal. 51:7.

14. Hence also it is, that God is said to *mention* the sin no more when the sinner returns to his duty. Ezek. 18:22; 33:16. For whatever is fully and completely paid for, yea, blotted out too, must of necessity be buried in eternal oblivion. Isa. 43:25. But conversion must go before remission, according to the order proposed by the prophet himself: "Wash ye, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil. Come now and let us reason together: Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow." Isa. 1:16. As if he had said: "Ye who require your sins to be forgiven, according to my covenant and promise, come forward and call me to an account. I do not indeed deny, that I promised you remission of sins; but it was on no other terms than that you should first repent. Where is your repentance? where is your true and living faith? If you have these, all is well! It shall not be my fault, if your sins (though as crimson in grain, though so deeply dyed, that neither heaven nor earth can blot them out), be not wholly pardoned and made whiter than snow." Repentance, therefore, is the true confession of sin; and if you have this in yourself, namely, sorrow for sin mixed with faith, be assured, that Christ, by virtue of his death and blood, will entirely forgive you your sins. This blood, as it is shed for us, so it cries to God in heaven, and procures a full remission of sin.

15. When a man is thoroughly affected with this sense of sin, he hastens in spirit to those cities of refuge, of which three, Bezer, Ramoth, and Golan, were set apart on this side Jordan, by Moses, being appointed by him, in order that he who had inadvertently killed his neighbor, might flee unto them and be preserved. Deut. 4:41–43.

16. And, alas! O Lord, how often have we inadvertently slain our neighbor with thoughts, words, hatred, envy, anger, revenge, and unmercifulness! Let us, therefore, fly upon the wings of faith and repentance, to the sanctuary of the grace of God, and to the merit and cross of Christ. No sooner do we arrive there, but we are safe; nor will the avenger measure to us again with that measure with which we served our neighbor. For by those cities of refuge, Christ Jesus is signified and represented. He is the true *Bezer*, that is, a *fenced tower*, according to that saying of Solomon: "The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe." Prov. 18:10. He also is the true *Ramoth*, which signifies *exalted:* for Christ is the Most High (Isa. 52:13; 57:15), "And at the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth." Phil. 2:10. Nor have we any other *Golan* besides him; which, as the word imports, is a *heap* or *multitude*, a storehouse of all manner of celestial gifts. Hence, we read in the Psalms: "With the Lord there is mercy; and with him is plenteous redemption." Psal. 130:7. And in the epistle to the Romans: "The Lord is rich unto all that call upon him." Rom. 10:12.

17. And this is the *third* part of inward, spiritual, and true worship, arising from the knowledge of God. This

knowledge is also the source of repentance, as repentance is of remission of sins, and each rests on an experimental knowledge of God, as on a proper foundation to sustain it.

18. Thus is the letter of the law of Moses changed into spirit, or into an inward, holy, and new life; and its sacrifices are converted into unfeigned repentance. Hereby we offer up unto God our body and soul, together with the sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving. Hereby we ascribe unto him alone, our knowledge, conversion, justification and remission of sin, that God alone may be all in all, and his grace be worthily acknowledged, and celebrated with thankful hearts and tongues unto all eternity. This, then, as hath been already mentioned, is the true worship of God, of which the prophet says: "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" Mic. 6:8. O when, therefore, shall we wretched mortals become truly penitent, that we may obtain this gracious pardon of sin? For without penitence it is impossible we should secure unto ourselves so incomparable a mercy. For how can sin be remitted, when there is no sense of sin, no sorrow affecting the mind, no hunger after divine grace? And how can he grieve for sins, who utterly refuses to abandon them, and to change his life for a better? May God, for Christ's sake, turn us, that so we may be truly turned! Lam. 5:21.

19. From these considerations it abundantly appears, that the true worship of God is seated in the heart, and consists in the knowledge of God, and in true repentance, which mortifies the flesh; and, through grace, renews man after the divine image. In this order, man is made the holy temple of the Lord, where, through the good Spirit of God, internal worship is performed, in the exercise of faith, charity, hope, humility, patience, prayer, thanksgiving, and the praise of God.

20. But though this worship has regard to God himself, and is offered to him alone; yet far be it from us to believe, that God has any need of our adoration or service, or that he receives any advantage from it, or any addition to his perfection. Let us rather think, that such is the mercy of God to miserable men, that he is willing to impart himself wholly to us with all his benefits, to live, to operate, and to dwell in us, provided we be but ready, by true knowledge, by faith and repentance, to entertain him in the heart, that as in the school of the Spirit, he may teach us true wisdom, and carry on the work which he has so happily begun.

21. For there is no work approved and accepted of God, but that of which he himself is the author. Therefore has he commanded us to repent and to believe, to pray and to fast; not that the benefit in any way might return to him, but belong to us alone. For to God no man can give, and from him no man can take away; him none can profit, and none can injure. If we be found devout and sincere in his sight, we shall reap the advantage of it ourselves; but if we be found false and corrupt, the evil will return upon our own heads. But what harm, O man, canst thou do to God, if even thou shouldst wilfully persist in impiety and a dissolute course of life?

22. God, therefore, commands that he should be served on thy account, not on his own. He being Love it-

self, it pleases him that many be found in his service, to whom he may freely impart the streams of his love, yea, even himself too. For as a mother cannot but love the infant that reposes on her breast, so God takes a singular pleasure in a free and unconfined communication of his love and kindness.

CHAPTER XXII.

A TRUE CHRISTIAN IS KNOWN PRIMARILY BY LOVE, AND BY A DAILY AMENDMENT OF LIFE.

The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree; he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing; to shew that the Lord is upright; he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.—Ps. 92 : 12–15.

NOT a Christian name, but a Christian life, evidences a true Christian: let this therefore be the care of the Christian, that in him Christ may be seen: and visibly appear unto others, in love, humility, and kindness! for he in whom Christ does not live, cannot be a Christian. And this holy life, having its roots within, in the spirit and heart of a man, must of necessity proceed from this inward principle—just as the fruit proceeds from the inherent virtue of the tree. For it is necessary that our life should be influenced by the Spirit of Christ, and fashioned after his example; according to that saying of the apostle: "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." Rom. 8 : 14. "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (Rom. 8 : 9): for all life proceeds from spirit; and as is the spirit which inwardly acts, moves, and governs in a man, so will the man outwardly appear. Whence it is evident, how necessary the Spirit of God is to a truly Christian life; and, therefore, Christ has not only commanded us to pray for the Spirit, but has also promised unto us this gift. Luke 11 : 13. This Spirit is the Spirit of regeneration (Tit. 3 : 5), by which we are quickened in Christ, into a new, spiritual, and heavenly life, and from the life and never-dying power of this Spirit of God, every Christian virtue must be derived. It is then that "the righteous man flourisheth as the palm tree, and groweth like a cedar in Lebanon." Ps. 92 : 12.

2. Hence it follows, that a man must be first internally renewed in the spirit of his mind after the image of God; and that his inward desires and affections must first be conformed to Christ (which the Apostle terms "the new man created after the image of God") (Eph. 4 : 24), before a suitable life can proceed from the heart. But as soon as the heart is inwardly renewed, the outward life proceeding from it is but a constant expression of that vital principle which prevails within the mind. Yea, since "God trieth the heart and the reins" (Ps. 7 : 9), it is

reasonable that a man should possess, in the more secret recesses of his heart, even much more than outwardly appears in his life.

3. Though, in our inward part, we attain not unto the purity of angels, it is but just that we should fervently sigh after it. And, indeed, God approves the desires of our spirit when it thirsts after a further purification: "The Spirit also helpeth our infirmities, and maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." Rom. 8:26. Yea, the blood of Christ purifies us by faith (Acts 15:9), so that we are "without spot or wrinkle" (Eph. 5:27); and in this respect we possess, not the purity, holiness, and righteousness of any angel, but that of Christ; yea, and Christ himself. 1 Cor. 1:30.

4. This undeserved righteousness, freely applied to us, must renew our body, soul, and spirit, and produce a true holiness of life and manners. And this life, though it is at first like a tender palm tree, must daily become more and more vigorous in us, and gather strength in Christ Jesus. And our growth in Christ will be in proportion as we advance in faith, in virtue, and the practice of a Christian life and holiness. This is to "flourish like a palm tree."

5. As the palm tree, when depressed, mounts the higher, so ought a Christian to be renewed continually in his spiritual desires and exercises. Eph. 4:23; Col. 3:10. He is to strengthen himself every day with fresh purposes to walk suitably to his new name, and with unwearied endeavors to avoid the danger of being a false Christian. He is to proceed with vigor and earnestness, as if he had but this day been initiated into the principles of true religion. For as one that enters upon a new office should have nothing more at heart than worthily to acquit himself in his post; so also should we act, who are called unto Christ, "with a holy calling." 2 Tim. 1:9. If this holy purpose be not firmly rooted within, no amendment of life will ensue, no vigor in piety, no increase in Christ; yea, the very quickening Spirit of Christ must be wanting. For such a resolution and holy firmness of doing good is the work of the Spirit of God, and of that preventing or anticipating grace which allures, invites, and moves all men. Happy is the man, who with his ears and heart proves obedient to it, and hearkens to that heavenly wisdom which "utters her voice in the streets." Prov. 1:20. In a word, whatever a man views with his eyes, is a manifestation of the Creator, by which he calls upon man, and endeavors to draw him to the love of himself.

6. Whenever, therefore, we feel this heavenly call or impulse upon our minds, we should immediately set our hand to work, and take care that a moment so invaluable do not slip away in a light and careless manner. This is an hour free from such obstacles as at other times closely beset us. If this be slothfully neglected, other days and times may possibly succeed, in which we cannot think, hear, speak, or do any good. This being foreseen by eternal Wisdom, she everywhere lifts up her voice, and calls upon us, lest we should neglect the opportunity which is so freely offered.

7. As a tree planted in the open air readily admits the light of the sun, and the benign influences of heaven; so the grace of God, with other celestial influences, shines upon thee, O man, and would revive and nourish thee by its presence, if the affairs of this world

did not hinder thee from receiving the benefit.

8. Call to mind the shortness of the time appointed for life! Seriously consider how many opportunities of doing good, and of reducing the Christian virtues into practice, thou hast already neglected. One half of thy life has possibly been consumed in sleeping, and the other in eating and drinking, and in other natural actions; so that when thou now comest to the grave, thou hast but just begun to enter upon a better life.

9. If thou art afraid to die in wickedness, O lead a holy life whilst thou art in good health! If thou desirest to leave the world as a Christian, endeavor to be a good Christian whilst thou art in it. Now, he only lives as a Christian, who demeans himself as if he were every day to die; well knowing that a good servant will at all times be ready at the call of his master. And God, by death, as by his messenger, summons us all before his tribunal.

10. "Blessed," therefore, "is that servant, whom the Lord, when he cometh, shall find watching. Of a truth, I say unto thee, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath." Luke 12 : 37, 44. And who is it that watches, but he who does not suffer himself to be carried away by the world, or its unhappy votaries? Let us, therefore, flee from both; knowing that the manners of this corrupt age are like baneful excrescences, which consume the vital sap of a tree, and, in a short time, cause it to wither.

CHAPTER XXIII.

HE WHO, IN CHRIST, DESIRES TO GROW IN GRACE, IS OFTEN COMPELLED TO WITHDRAW FROM WORLDLY SOCIETY.

How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts!—My heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.—Ps. 84 : 1, 2.

THOU actest wisely, if thou avoidest too frequent an intercourse with worldly men. For as it is never better for our bodies than when they are at home; so it is ever best with the soul, when it is at rest in its own habitation, which is God himself; from whom it derives life and being. To him, therefore, the soul must return again, if ever she is to enjoy rest, and find safety.

2. It is observed of all creatures, that they nowhere thrive so well, as where they drew their first life and origin. Thus the sea to the fishes, the air to the birds, the earth to the plants, and God to the soul, is the place of rest, according to the Psalmist, "The sparrow hath found a house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young." Ps. 84 : 2. As that man will bring trouble upon himself, who gives young people too much liberty to go abroad; so shall he suffer much, who yields up the reins of his tongue and thoughts,

allowing them to wander through the affairs of the world, as so many circles of vanity. Be assured, that you will escape many faults, if you study to confine your thoughts within the limits of your heart.

3. "Those that are planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God." Ps. 92:13. What are these courts? They are the internal and spiritual sabbaths of the heart; which, as Lebanon in the desert, flourish best in a retirement of mind, and abstraction of spirit. Labor to attain this solitude of soul, and thou shalt become fit to search thine own heart, and to contemplate that variety of wonders and mercies which God has bestowed upon us.

4. Nor are we to imitate those who admire subtle disputes and inventions, who take pleasure in reading fine, pleasant, and witty productions; which, if rightly considered, deprave, rather than improve the mind of the reader. Whatever does not promote the repose of the heart, and the continual renovation of the mind, should neither be heard, spoken, read, nor even be entertained in thought, by a disciple of Jesus. True Christians are like the trees of God, which should daily grow stronger, and take deeper root *in Christ*. St. Paul testifies of himself, that besides "Christ and him crucified," he desired to know nothing. 1 Cor. 2:2. And this has been the practice of all the saints of God, who have endeavored, to the utmost of their power, by carefully cherishing this blessed tranquillity of heart, to approach nearer and nearer to a life raised above the world, and to emulate those elevated minds that entirely rest in God, as the centre of all their happiness. One of them once said: "As often as I converse with men, I return less a man in some part or other." For since the dignity of human nature principally consists in the similitude of God, and therefore God hath described man to be the image and likeness of himself (Gen. 1:26); it follows, that the more unlike any man is to God, the less a man he is: and the more closely he unites himself to God, the more conformed to HIM does he become. None can, however, turn himself to God, who does not first withdraw himself from the world. It is the nature of every seed, to bring forth a plant of its own kind; so if the seed of God, the Holy Spirit and Word, be in thee, thou shalt become a "tree of righteousness, The planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified." Isa. 61:3.

5. Nothing is more common, than that some word or other is dropped in the conversation of men, which being idle and vain, grievously wounds and pollutes the soul. No man, therefore, has more security and peace, than he who keeps at home, in the house of his heart, and restrains his thoughts, his words, and his senses, from straying beyond their bounds.

6. He that will speak well, must first learn to be silent; for to talk much is not eloquence, but prating. He who desires to command well, must first learn to obey; since it is impossible that he should be a good ruler over others, who knows not how to be subject and obedient to God. He that desires peace and serenity of mind, must set a watch over his tongue, and maintain a good conscience; for an evil conscience is like the troubled sea; yet shall it find rest if it return unto Christ in true repentance. The dove which Noah sent out of the ark, not finding any place of rest, returned to it. Gen. 8:9.

This ark is Christ and the Church, having only one door or window, which is that of repentance, through which we are to come to Christ. And as the dove retired into the ark immediately when she found no rest for her foot; so when thou art floating in a sea of worldly affairs, and art in danger of suffering shipwreck, retire immediately into thy heart to Christ; lest, being too much tossed on the floods of the world, thy rest be broken, and the tranquillity of thy mind entirely destroyed.

7. While thou conversest with men, and art engaged in the affairs of this world, be careful to manage everything with fear and humility. Avoid all self-confidence and rashness in acting. Remember that thou art as a tender shoot tied to a prop, in order that it may grow up with the more safety: so do thou constantly lean on the staff of humility, and the fear of God, lest a sudden tempest should arise, and lay thee level with the ground. Alas! how many a man is deceived when he, too unadvisedly, rushes into worldly affairs. Persuade thyself, therefore, that it is as unsafe to trust to the world, as to the sea. The external joy of the world, though for a time it soothe a man in his carnal security, and promise prosperous things, yet may soon be disturbed by an unexpected tempest, leaving nothing behind but the sting of an evil conscience.

8. If a man would, on the one hand, seek no pleasure in what is frail or perishing; and if, on the other, with a mind freed from secular joys and affairs, he would give himself up to those more heavenly concerns that become a true Christian, he would often be visited with a fervent devotion, a profound peace, a sweet tranquillity, a serene conscience, and other divine comforts. But, alas! we will not be persuaded of these things; and hence it follows, that our conversion, amendment, and devotion are, by our too free conversation with men, rather hindered than improved. We may find within us, what we easily lose in an inconsiderate pursuit of things without us. And as a tree nowhere prospers better than in its natural soil; so the inward man grows nowhere more happily, than in the inward ground of the soul, where Christ resides.

9. The conscience of man is possessed either with joy or sorrow. If the conscience be conversant with things internal and heavenly, it will refresh us with inward delight and comfort; but if it be polluted with an excessive cleaving to worldly concerns, it will be of necessity attended with inward sorrow and perplexity. 2 Cor. 7 : 10.

10. As often as the soul is affected with hearty remorse for sin, she bewails herself, and sends up secret groans to the throne of mercy. This penitential exercise is a wholesome fountain of tears, in which the soul, night after night, cleanses and washes herself by the Spirit and by faith, through the name of *Jesus* (1 Cor. 6 : 11), that so she may be duly prepared to enter into the inward sanctuary, and holy of holies, and there enjoy a secret intercourse with the Lord.

11. And because the Lord is "a God that hideth himself" (Isa. 45 : 15), the soul must approach him in a way remote from the noise of the world, that she may the more freely partake of his divine communications. Hence the Psalmist says: "I will hear what God the Lord will speak." Ps. 85 : 8.

And "I sought the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears. This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles." Psalm 34 : 4, 6. "Unto thee will I pray: my voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up." Psalm 5 : 2, 3. Thus the farther the soul retires from the world, the more intimately she converses with God; just as the patriarch Jacob conversed most familiarly with God and angels when he was farthest removed from friends and children. Gen. 32 : 24–29. It cannot, indeed, be expressed in words, how much a soul sequestered from the friendship and fellowship of the world, is loved by God and by angels.

CHAPTER XXIV.

OF THE LOVE OF GOD AND OUR NEIGHBOR.

Now the end of the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned.—1 TIM. 1 : 5.

IN this verse, the apostle sets before us love, the highest and noblest virtue; and acquaints us at the same time, with four particulars concerning it. *First*, that Love is the summary of all the commandments: for "love," says the apostle, "is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom. 13 : 10); in which all the precepts are comprehended, and without which, all gifts and virtues are unprofitable and fruitless.

2. What he says in the *second* place, namely, that Charity must arise from a pure heart, relates to the love of *God*, which requires a heart void of worldly love and affection, according to that saying of St. John: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever." 1 John 2 : 15–17. Whosoever, therefore. has a heart purified from all love to the creature, so as to depend or acquiesce in no transient good whatsoever, can cleave most intimately to God, saying with David, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee. My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever." Psal. 73 : 25, 26. The love of such a one, proceeds out of a "*pure heart.*" Of the same character also, is that love which is attended with great delight, pleasure and joy in God; of which we have an illustration in David: "I will love thee, O Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower." Psal. 18 : 1, 2.

3. The apostle, in the *third* place, teaches us, that love must be "out of a good conscience." This properly concerns the love of *our neighbor*, who

is to be loved, not for the sake of interest or worldly advantage (which would be a false love out of a bad conscience); but for the sake of God only, and of his commandments. Nor ought we to afflict our neighbor either by word or deed, either secretly or openly; nor on any account, bear envy, wrath, hatred, malice or rancor against him; that so our conscience may not accuse us when we address ourselves in prayer to God Almighty.

4. The *fourth* requisite of Love is, a "faith unfeigned;" so that nothing be done that is contrary to the rule of faith, and to our Christian profession, and that God be not denied publicly or privately, in prosperity or adversity. This is the substance of what is contained in that sentence of the apostle. We shall now speak more particularly, with respect to each of the several parts.

5. In the *first* place, then, *Love*, according to the apostle, "is the end of the commandment;" for that love which arises from a pure faith, is the noblest among the fruits and effects of faith; than which a man can do nothing better or more acceptable to God. For God does not require at our hands great and difficult enterprises, no high performances that exceed our capacities; but he has changed the yoke of the Old Testament service, and its many commandments and ordinances into faith and love, and has given us for this end the Holy Ghost, who, "shedding abroad in our hearts the love of God" (Rom. 5:5), renders everything sweet and easy, and proves the original spring of this heavenly virtue.

6. Love, therefore, is not a hard work, a labor attended with toil and difficulty; on the contrary, it makes everything easy to a good man. "His commandments are not grievous" (1 John 5:3), that is to say, they are not so to an enlightened Christian; for wherever the Spirit of God comes, he creates a free, willing and ready heart in the discharge of Christian virtues. Nor does God require of his children great skill or learning: it is only love which he regards. If this be sincere and fervent, free from disguise and dissimulation, God takes more pleasure and delight in it, than in all the knowledge and wisdom, in all the art and talent that any man upon earth, in his best works, can possibly exhibit. Wherever this divine love is wanting, there all wisdom and knowledge, all works and gifts, are altogether unprofitable. They are accounted vain and dead, as a mere body without life. 1 Cor. 13:1, 2.

7. As for human learning and great abilities, they are common to heathens as well as to Christians; and great actions are performed as well by infidels as by believers. It is *love* only which proves the sure test of a sound Christian, distinguishing between the false and the true. For wherever Charity is wanting, there can be no good thing, however it may claim the admiration of men by its specious appearances. The reason is, because God is not there; for "God is love, and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him." 1 John 4:16.

8. Love is also pleasant, not only to God who gives it, but also to man, who exercises it: whereas, all arts and sciences, all the knowledge and wisdom which man grasps, are not attained but with great labor and study, with much care and application, and even at the expense of bodily health. But this heaven-born love cheers both the body and the mind. It invigorates the spirits, confers new strength, and

wonderfully improves and exalts the mind. Nor is it attended with any loss whatever, but on the contrary, produces many good and noble effects in the soul. Love is itself the reward of the lover, and virtue always carries its own recompense with it: as, on the contrary, the vicious man is punished by his own excesses, and vice is the constant tormentor of him that commits it.

9. Again, when the other faculties of the body and mind are faint and wearied, love faints not. Love is never weary, never ceases. Prophecy may pass away, tongues may cease, and sciences may be destroyed; arts may be lost, the knowledge of mysteries may vanish; yea, faith itself at last may fail also: but yet "love never faileth," nor can fail: for when all that is imperfect is happily removed, then love alone abides forever, and attains its full perfection. 1 Cor. 13 : 8.

10. To render anything pleasing to Almighty God, it is necessary that it proceed from him; since he approves of nothing but what he himself works in us. Now, God is love; it therefore follows, that all that we do, ought to proceed from a divine faith, in order that it may be pleasing to God; and from pure love, that it may prove profitable to men. This love must be *pure*, without any regard to self-honor, self-interest, and those mean designs which sometimes intrude into a Christian's actions. In like manner our *prayers* should spring from a principle of love, that they may have the more ready admittance to the God of love. Consider, therefore, how that man's prayer can be acceptable to God, who is full of wrath and rancor, hatred and malice? Were such a one to repeat the whole Psalter every day, it would be but an abomination before the Lord. True worship consists in spirit (John 4 : 23, 24), in faith, in love, not in a long recital of words. Remember the example of Christ, who, from a merciful heart, cried, "Father, forgive them." Luke 33 : 34. A man that does not love God, is also unwilling to pour out his heart in prayer and supplication: but to him who is affected with a sense of divine love, the duty of prayer is easy and delightful. A man that has a cordial love to God, readily serves him; but he that is void of this love, does not serve him at all, though he may submit to much toil and drudgery, and even heap one mountain upon another.

11. Upon the whole, then, nothing is more agreeable to human nature, nothing better and more profitable, than this divine love, which, therefore, should be stirred up in the heart of man, and when once raised into a flame, should be carefully preserved from being ever quenched.

12. Faith should work all things in a Christian through love; and love should be the agent of faith, as the body is the agent of the soul. The soul sees and hears, speaks and acts, through the body, to which she is united; so, O man! should the love of God, springing from faith, do all things in and through thee. Whether thou eat or drink, hear or speak, commend or reprove, let all be done *in love*, after the example of Christ, in whom resided nothing but pure love. If thou beholdest thy neighbor, behold him with the eyes of a compassionate friend; if thou hearest him, hear him with love and tenderness; and if thou speakest with him, let thy speech be seasoned with love and Christian affection.

13. Carefully preserve the root of Christian love by faith, in order that nothing but that which is good may grow up in thy heart, and issue thence, as from its genuine centre. 1 Cor. 16: 14. Thou shalt then be enabled to fulfil the commandments of God; since they are all comprehended in love. Hence, a holy man has expressed himself after this manner: "O love of God in the Holy Ghost! thou art the highest joy of souls, and the only divine life of men. Whosoever enjoys not thee, is dead even while he lives; and whosoever possesses thee, never dies in the sight of God. Where thou art not, there the life of men is a continual death; but where thou art, there life is made a foretaste of eternal happiness." Whence it appears that this divine love is the sum and fulfilling of all the commandments of God.

14. We consider now, in the *second* place, that our love to God ought to proceed "out of a pure heart." The heart of a man who is desirous to love God, ought first to be cleansed from all worldly love and attachment to the creature. It is then that God becomes the chief and sovereign Good to the soul. She can then say, "The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance, and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot." Ps. 16: 5. "The Lord knoweth the days of the upright," that is, those that love him out of a disinterested heart; "and their inheritance shall be forever." Ps. 37: 18. "Delight thyself in the Lord, and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart." Ps. 37: 4. In a word, God is the only fountain whence all our joy ought constantly to spring.

15. God, therefore, should be the most beloved object of our souls, and our hearts should rest in him alone, because he is the highest good. He is nothing else than mercy and goodness, love and kindness, clemency and patience, truth, comfort, peace, joy, life, and happiness. All this he has laid up in Jesus Christ. Whoever, therefore, has Christ, is thereby put into the possession of all these heavenly virtues. And whoever loves God, must also of necessity love God's truth and mercy, his goodness and kindness, and the whole train of divine virtues.

16. For, a true lover of God has a love to all that God loves, and an aversion to all that God hates. If any man loves God, he must love truth, mercy, and righteousness, because God is all this himself. He must also delight in humility and meekness, since thereby he is rendered conformable to that meekness and lowly-mindedness which resided in Jesus. On the other hand, a true lover of God cannot but abhor all ungodliness, with all the works of iniquity; because all manner of impiety is enmity against God, and is the work of the devil himself. A lover of God hates a lie, because the devil is the father of lies, and was a liar from the beginning. And this is the reason that every one who loves lies, injustice, and other vicious workings of nature, must needs, in that sense, be the offspring of the devil (see John 8: 44); and again, whoever loves Christ, his Lord and Saviour, loves also the example of his pure and holy life, his humility and meekness, his patience, and the other heavenly virtues that appeared in his conduct. And such a one must of necessity be adopted into the number of the children of God.

17. This love, proceeding out of a "pure heart," must be obtained from God by prayer and supplication. And truly, God is willing to enkindle in us this heavenly flame through the love

of Christ, if he be but earnestly solicited, and if the heart be every day and every moment laid open to his divine influence. If thy love should grow cold and weak at any time, arouse thy heart, faint not, but stir up the grace of God within thee, and be not too much discouraged at it. In the name of God arise again, set to work, and renew the acts of thy first love. As thou art sensible of thy coldness in love, thou mayest be assured from that circumstance, that the eternal light of divine love is not *wholly* extinguished, although it be eclipsed, and at present give but little heat. Doubt not that thy Saviour will enlighten thee again, and fire thy heart with his love; so that thou mayest sit once more under his shadow, and rejoice in the light of his countenance. At the same time be earnest in prayer and supplications, lest hereafter the flame of this heavenly love should be again deadened in thy heart. Such is love "out of a pure heart," unmixed with love of the world.

18. Let us now consider, in the *third* place, Love, as arising from a "good conscience," and as it respects our neighbor. The love of God and the love of our neighbor are so closely united, that they can never be separated. The true touchstone of our love to God, is the love which we bear to our neighbor. "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God, love his brother also." 1 John 4:20, 21. For the love of God cannot dwell in a man who is filled with hatred or malice, or divested of all bowels of love and compassion. If thou hast no pity on thy brother, who stands in need of thy help, how canst thou love God, who needs not anything that is thine, and has commanded thee to express thy love towards him, by bestowing marks of it upon thy brother?

19. As faith unites to God, so love unites to our neighbor; and as a man is made up of body and soul, so faith and love (that is, the love both of God and of our neighbor) make up a true Christian. Thus he that "dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God." 1 John 4:16. And since God effectually desires the good of all men, it follows, that he who loves in like manner is of one heart with God; and that he who is otherwise affected is against God, and has not the mind of the Lord, but is the enemy of God as well as of his neighbor. He is, unquestionably, an adversary to God who is an enemy to men.

20. It is the property of this love to bewail and compassionate the infirmities of others. Gal. 6:1. Indeed, the failings and weaknesses of our fellow-creatures represent to us, as in a mirror, our own imperfections, and remind us of the various defects that encumber our nature. Therefore, when thou seest another overtaken in a fault, consider that thou also thyself art but a man; and learn from thy own infirmities, to bear those of others with patience, meekness, and humility. Rom. 15:7.

21. Such especially as sin, not from malice or determined wickedness, but who are surprised into a fault by weakness and inadvertency; and who, coming soon to themselves again, repent of that which they have done, and firmly resolve to watch the more against the snares of Satan for the future; such souls as these are surely

to be pitied and assisted. He that does otherwise, shows that he has nothing in him of the merciful and forbearing spirit of Christ. When a man hastily condemns the faults of his neighbor, without feeling any love or compassion, it is an evident sign that he is altogether void of God, and of his merciful spirit. On the contrary, a true Christian, being anointed with the spirit of Christ, treats all men as one that has a fellow-feeling with them, and bears with them in a sympathizing Christian love and tenderness, according to the example of Christ, which he has left us to follow. Therefore, if any man, upon serious search into his inward condition, finds that he has not the love of his neighbor abiding in him, let him know, assuredly, that the love of God remains not in his soul, and that he himself is without God. This should strike him with horror and indignation against himself; it should influence him the more speedily (after repenting of his sin from the bottom of his heart) to reconcile himself to his neighbor, that, in this order, the love of God may also return to him again. Then all his actions, while he continues in this love and faith, are good, holy, and divine; and this love, dwelling in his heart, will actuate him freely and willingly to embrace all men, and with great affection and joy to do them all manner of kindnesses; so that he will "rejoice over them to do them good," even as God himself. Jer. 32 : 41.

22. Without this love, whatever is in man, is diabolical and altogether evil. Nor is there, indeed, any other cause why the devil can do no good, but because he is utterly destitute of love both towards God and man. Hence, all which he does is radically evil, and deprived of all intrinsic goodness. In all that he sets about, he designs nothing but God's dishonor, and man's destruction. He cunningly contrives ways to vent his enmity both upon God and man; and, therefore, he seeks for such hearts as he can fill with spite and envy, and then discharges through them his malice and wrath. "And hereby it is manifest who are the children of God, and the children of the devil." 1 John 3 : 10.

23. *Lastly*, Love must be "out of faith unfeigned," that is, we must love God equally in prosperity and adversity. Whoever loves God sincerely, accepts with joy all the dispensations of his Providence, after the example of Christ; who, with a cheerful and ready mind, took up the cross, which he knew that the will of his Father imposed on him. "I have," says he, "a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened (and in pain) till it be accomplished!" Luke 12 : 50. In the same manner have all the holy martyrs carried with joy their cross after him.

24. To those that unfeignedly love God, the cross, which Christ enjoins us to bear, does not prove grievous or burdensome; and this for no other reason, than because it is the *yoke of Christ*. Matt. 11 : 29. If the magnet attracts the heavy iron, why should not that heavenly loadstone, the love of God, attract the burden of our cross, and render it light and agreeable; especially after the heart is affected with a touch of the divine love? If the sugar sweeten such herbs as are bitter by nature, why should not the sweetness of the love of God make that pleasant and easy, which to the flesh is nothing but a cross and affliction? And truly it was from the fulness of this love, that the blessed martyrs bore the most exquisite pain

with patience and joy; being transported with it to such a degree, as to be almost insensible of their very torments.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE LOVE OF OUR NEIGHBOR, MORE PARTICULARLY CONSIDERED.

Of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.—2 PETER 2 : 19.

THERE is no bondage more hard and grievous, than to be under the yoke of the passions: but of all these, none is so cruel as *hatred*, which so weakens and depresses all the powers both of body and mind, as not to leave to the man one free thought. On the contrary, he who lives in *love* is *free*. He is no slave to anger, envy, covetousness, pride, lying, or calumny; and being delivered from these by love, he suffers not himself to be subdued by evil desires, but continues Christ's freeman (1 Cor. 7 : 22) in the liberty of the Spirit: for "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." 2 Cor. 3 : 17. Whosoever, therefore, walks in the love of Christ, is no longer a slave to sin, or a servant to carnal affections; for the Spirit of God's love has freed and purified him from carnal concupiscence. And we see that the love of God extends over all men; of which we not only find sufficient proofs in Scripture, but the footsteps of his universal benignity are also everywhere displayed in nature. We are all equally covered with the heavens, and have all the use of the sun, the air, the earth, and the water; as well they who are of high degree, as they who are of the meanest condition. And the very same mind that is in God towards us, ought also to be in us towards men; God himself having set us a pattern of universal kindness for our imitation. He regards not one more than another, but loves all with an equal affection. With him there is no respect of persons, of dignity, or merit; but he beholds all alike in Christ. This is for our instruction. Now, as God acts towards us, so ought we to act towards our neighbor. And truly, after the same manner as we deal with man, so God will deal with us again. We need not go far to inquire what favor we have with God Almighty. If we but enter into our own conscience, it will impartially tell us, what mind and affection we bear to our neighbor; and as we have done to him, so will God certainly do to us again, and return our works into our own bosom. And in this sense it is said of God, that "with the pure he shews himself pure; and with the froward, shews himself froward" (Ps. 18 : 26); that is, if thou bearest an evil mind to thy neighbor, God will be thine adversary also.

2. Since, therefore, God has no need of our service, he has substituted our neighbor in his place, to receive our charity, and has commanded us to pay it as to himself. He has made this love of our neighbor the very *touchstone* by which we are to examine the sincerity of our love to God.

3. And it is for this reason that he has enjoined the love of our neighbor with so great earnestness, requiring us to show constantly the same love to him which God shows to us. For unless a man be fully reconciled to, and be in perfect charity with his neighbor, he cannot have the favor or grace of God. And although all the sins of the world are atoned for by the death of Christ, and a full pardon obtained, yet all mankind may in some sense be said to be in the same circumstances with the servant in the parable, who had not wherewithal to pay; the king freely remitted him all his debts: but when he afterwards behaved himself cruelly towards his fellow-servant, the king revoked his pardon, and condemned the servant, on account of the hard usage with which he treated his neighbor. Matt. 18 : 23, etc. This parable Christ concludes with the remarkable expression: "So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother, their trespasses." Verse 35. And, "With the same measure that ye mete withal, it shall be measured to you again." Luke 6 : 38.

4. Hence, it plainly appears, that man was not created for himself alone, but for his neighbor's sake also. So strict is the commandment of loving our neighbor, that when it is broken, the very end of our creation is destroyed, and the love of God is immediately withdrawn from the soul. Nothing is left but the severest justice, judging and condemning all that are void of this charity.

5. If we duly considered these things, we should never be angry with one another; neither would "the sun ever go down upon our wrath." Eph. 4 : 26. It is true, on the one hand, that Christ by his death on the cross has offered a full and complete atonement for all our trespasses, and in this respect, has remitted all our sins at once; yet is it, on the other hand, an awful consideration, that the whole extent of the merits of Christ will be of no avail at all to us, if we continue to hate our brother, and will neither pardon nor love him. We shall be entirely cut off from all the benefits that flow from the atonement.

6. Hencé it appears how important the love of our neighbor must be in the sight of God, binding us even to such a degree, that God refuses to be loved by us, unless we love our neighbor also; so that if we fail in our benevolence toward the latter, we fall at the same time from grace and divine charity. And for this reason, we were created all equal and of the same nature, that we might not despise one other; but, like children of one common parent, live in peace and love, and endeavor to maintain a good and serene conscience.

7. Now, whoever hates and despises his brother, hates and despises God also, who has forbidden all such animosities in the severest terms. If thou contemnest thy brother, God also contemns thee; which hastens thy judgment and condemnation, and deprives thee of all interest in the merit and redemption of Christ, by which sin is forgiven.

8. For it cannot be possible that a heart filled with wrath and bitterness, should in any degree reap a saving fruit from the blood of Christ, which was shed from a motive of pure love. Yea, the above parable (Matt. 18 : 35) plainly convinces us, that God was less offended at the debt of ten thousand talents, than at the barbarous cruelty of which the servant was

guilty; he can overlook the debt, but he cannot overlook the want of love. Let us, therefore, ponder the words with which the Lord concludes the parable: "So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you."

CHAPTER XXVI.

WHEREFORE OUR NEIGHBOR IS TO BE LOVED.

Owe no man any thing, but to love one another; for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.—ROM. 13:8.

"WHEREWITH shall I come before the Lord? Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?—He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God." Micah 6:6–8.

2. By this question, and the answer to it, the prophet teaches us, wherein the true worship of God properly consists; not in ceremonies and sacrifices, since we are not able to give anything to God, because all is his own already; not in offering up human sacrifices, which he does not require at our hands, but detests and abhors, because they are injurious to Jesus Christ, the great propitiatory oblation which God appointed to take away the sins of the world (John 1:29): but the true worship of God consists in pure faith, which, from the visible effect of it, the prophet here describes, by "doing justly," that is by the exercise of faith in righteousness, in charity and mercy, (which is more pleasing than all sacrifices); and in true humility and contrition, as it is said: "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." Ps. 51:17.

3. To this divine worship, founded within the heart, and proceeding from faith, love, and humility, St. Paul powerfully exhorts us in Rom. 13:8–10. His admonition contains in it both the praise of Christian love, and the perpetual duty in which we stand engaged to our neighbor, and without which it is impossible to serve God aright. For truly there is no other way of serving God, except by that which he himself works in our hearts: so that to serve God, is nothing else but to serve our neighbor, and to do him all the offices of Christian love and humanity which we are able to perform.

4. The apostle calls love a summary of all virtues, and the "fulfilling of the law." Rom. 13:10. Not that we are able by any acts of charity, to fulfil perfectly the divine law, or that consequently we can merit eternal life thereby; (which cannot possibly be, except our love were complete in every respect, and arrived to a con-

summate perfection): but the apostle desires to suggest thereby the wonderful excellency of this virtue, and to incline us, at the same time, to an unfeigned love. As to our righteousness, it is not grounded on any work of ours, but only on the merits of Christ applied to us by faith.

5. From this righteousness of Christ, apprehended by faith, springs love to our neighbor, together with the whole train of Christian virtues, called by the apostle "fruits of righteousness, which are to the glory and praise of God." Phil. 1:11. But since the dignity of this virtue is so very eminent, it will be proper to set forth further motives by which the practice of it may be endeared to us.

6. The first and strongest of all motives, is that which St. John uses: "God is love; and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him" (1 John 4:16). For who would not wish to be in God, and to remain in Him; and that God should be and remain in him? And who, on the contrary, would not abhor to be in Satan, and to have Satan dwelling in him? And yet this is the ordinary consequence, as often as charity is repulsed, and unnatural animosities are admitted into the heart. For as God is a lover of men, ready to save them from eternal destruction, so the devil is a hater of men. This is further explained by St. John: "He that loveth, is born of God, and knoweth God." 1 John 4:7. And again: "In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother." 1 John 3:10. Now, can there be anything more desirable than to be ranked among the children of God, to be begotten of God, and to know God truly and experimentally? But whoever has his heart void of this love, and has never felt its force and energy, nor tasted its goodness and gentleness, long suffering and patience, this man knows not God, who is pure love. For the knowledge of God must proceed from enjoyment and experience. And how is it possible that a man should know Christ, whilst he is a stranger to love, and to that loving intercourse which subsists betwixt Christ and the soul? Hence it follows, that he that is without love, is without Christ also. But he who is earnest in the exercise of love, shall not be left barren in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ: "For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." 2 Pet. 1:8.

7. The second motive is found in what our Lord himself says: "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." John 13:35. Now, in order to be a disciple of Christ, it is not enough to be a Christian in name, or by a mere verbal profession; but to be a disciple of Christ implies much more. Such a one must believe in his name; must love him, imitate him, live in him. He must, in a peculiar manner, adhere to him; must feel the love of Christ infused into his soul, and freely partake of all the gifts and benefits purchased by him. Whoever has not this love of Christ abiding in him, is not Christ's disciple, nor can he pretend to have any share in his merits. For how is it possible that Christ should know a man who has neither faith in, nor any love to him? As a flower is known by its fragrance, and fruit by its flavor, so a true disciple of Christ is known by his love.

8. Hence, St. Paul does not hesitate to affirm, that "all gifts without charity are nothing" (1 Cor. 13:2); which is a third motive why we should desire this excellent gift. In truth, neither the knowledge of divers tongues, nor the gift of miracles, nor the understanding of high and sublime mysteries, nor any extraordinary endowments, are sufficient marks by which to know a Christian; this prerogative being entirely reserved to "faith, which worketh by love." Gal. 5:6. Nor does God require any hard things at our hand (such as the working of miracles), but to exercise love and humility; virtues that may be apprehended by the meanest capacity. Nor will it be demanded of thee in the day of judgment, whether thou hast been versed in arts, tongues, and sciences, or what great parts thou hast possessed in this world; but whether thou hast exercised thyself in faith and love. "I was a hungered," saith our Saviour, "and ye gave me meat, etc." Matt. 25:35, etc. And St. Paul says to the Galatians: "In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision (no gifts, no parts, no endowments, no respect of persons); but faith which worketh by love." Gal. 5:6.

9. Add to these, as a fourth motive, that passage of St. John: "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God, love his brother also." 1 John 4:20, 21. This all the inspired writers teach, that love towards God cannot possibly exist in the soul without love to our neighbor. For he that hates his neighbor must be an enemy to God; because God is a lover of men, and requires us to be of the same mind.

10. A fifth motive is, that love is the great law of nature, and attended with many things beneficial to mankind, without which we would not be able to live. When any good thing happens to man, it certainly proceeds from divine love. Hence, St. Paul calls love, the "bond of perfectness" (Col. 3:14); and describes, in Rom. 12:9, 10, the excellent fruits that grow upon this stock. And our Saviour himself teaches to the same effect: "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets." Matt. 7:12. And this is so universal a truth, that the heathens themselves were, by the very law of nature written in their hearts, convinced of it. Hence they said: "That which you would not should be done to yourself, do not the same to another." This excellent sentence, the Emperor Severus, a prince adorned with many virtues, had daily in his mouth, and enacted it into a law for the good of the country.

11. A sixth motive is, that love is a beautiful image and a foretaste of eternal life; when the saints shall love each other sincerely; when they shall delight in one another, and converse together with wonderful and ineffable concord, in an inexpressible sweetness, in unfeigned affection, cheerfulness, and joy. Whoever, therefore, would conceive to himself an image of that marvellous love and harmony, and obtain some foretaste of the exquisite pleasures of the eternal beatitude, let him study this love, in which he will find a singular pleasure, with much peace and tranquillity of mind.

12. The more pure and fervent our

charity is, the nearer it approaches to the divine nature. This is a seventh motive. In God, in Christ, and in the Holy Ghost, there resides the most pure, fervent, and transcendent love. It is then that our love becomes pure, when we love one another, not for the sake of private interest, but for the sake of the love of God, which is the great and unerring pattern which we ought carefully to follow. For God loves us with a disinterested love: but if any man loves his neighbor for his own private profit and interest, his love is not pure at all, nor does it, in any degree, come up to that sublime example which is set us by God Almighty. This makes also the difference betwixt heathen and Christian charity. A Christian loves his neighbor in God and in Christ, disinterestedly and generously, without debasing himself by any ignoble or selfish design. Thus is his love preserved pure and sincere, free from dissimulation, falsehood, and any counterfeit. Whereas the heathens polluted their deeds with self-honor and interest, and other sinister ends, which mingled with the best of their actions. This Christian love, when it becomes a habit in the mind, produces a true fervency of spirit, to perform still greater acts of love and benignity. And it is then that love is truly fervent, when it inspires the lover with great mercy and tenderness towards his fellow-creatures, and prompts to vigorous efforts to relieve their necessity. When he has the affairs of his neighbor as much at heart as his own, then he is ready even to "lay down his very life for the brethren" (1 John 3 : 16), if need be, or, after the example of Moses and Paul, to be "accursed" for the brethren, and to be "blotted out of the book of God," if this possibly could be done. Exod. 32 : 32; Rom. 9 : 3.

13. Hence it follows (which is the eighth motive), that we ought also to love our enemies, according to the Lord's precept: "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not the publicans the same?" Matt. 5 : 44; Luke 6 : 32, etc. Herein consist the excellency and prerogative of a true Christian; namely, to subject nature to this divine principle, to tame flesh and blood, and to overcome the world, and the *evil* therein with *goodness*. Rom. 12 : 21. "If thine enemy hunger, feed him." Rom. 12 : 20. It is not enough for a Christian not to hurt his neighbor or enemy; but he is commanded to *do* him *good*, and to support him with such aids, as are convenient for him (Exod. 23 : 4, etc.); whoever refuses to comply with these terms, cannot be a child of God, or a disciple of Christ.

14. The ninth motive is, that whoever does not practise Christian love and charity, separates himself from the spiritual body of Christ, that is, the Church; and forfeits all the privileges of this body, and even the merits of Christ; there being but "one Lord, one faith, one baptism." Eph. 4 : 5. For as the members when cut off from the body, no longer partake of the life and power of the head, but are dead; so those that do not live in the practice of love and charity, are separate from Christ, the sole Head of the Church, and can receive no power and vital influence out of his fulness. Therefore, St. John says,

"He that loveth not his brother, abideth in death." 1 John 3 : 14.

15. Lastly, we ought to love one another, because on the wings of this love the prayer of a Christian ascends to heaven. By prayer, all good gifts are to be obtained; and without prayer, all helps and consolations are expected in vain. But then our prayer must spring from the evangelical principle of love; since God gives ear to no prayers, but to those that are grounded on faith and Christian charity: "If two of you agree on earth, as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven." Matt. 18 : 19.

16. Come then, O man! let this sweet agreement and harmony be established among us upon earth. Let us live in the spirit of love, that peace and union may dwell among us; for where peace is, there is the God of peace (2 Cor. 13 : 11; Rom. 15 : 33); and where He is, there "he hath also commanded his blessing and life for evermore." Ps. 133 : 3.

CHAPTER XXVII.

WHEREFORE OUR ENEMIES ARE TO BE LOVED.

Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven.—MATT. 5 : 44, 45.

THE first cause why enemies ought to be loved, is the express commandment of God by his Son; for which he gives this reason, "that we may be the children of our Father in heaven," that is, "of him that loved us when we were yet his enemies." Rom. 5 : 10. As if he had said, "Unless you love your enemies, you cannot be the children of the heavenly Father: and he that is not God's son, what father shall he have?" This commandment of the Lord is little practised; alas! how backward we are in bringing forth such fruits as become the children of God! If we be his children, truly we ought to study the great lesson of loving our enemies, that so, in some degree, we may express the character of our Father in heaven.

2. The Scripture says, "He that loveth not his brother, abideth in death." 1 John 3 : 14. And why does he abide in death? Because he has not yet received that vital principle which is to be derived from Christ. The spiritual and heavenly life consists in faith towards God, and in love to our neighbor. Thus, St. John says, "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." 1 John 3 : 14. Whence it is manifest, that love is an undoubted sign and effect of spiritual life or restoration to life in Christ; as hatred to men is an infallible proof of spiritual death and separation from God. And this spiritual death here, will end in eternal death hereafter; of which our Lord faithfully warns us.

3. Whoever, therefore, suffers his

heart to be filled with wrath and bitterness against his neighbor, ought to know assuredly, that even his best performances, his prayer and attendance on divine worship, and other works of that nature, are altogether vain, and of no account before God. St. Paul says, "Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." 1 Cor. 13 : 3.

4. It is, on the other hand, the property of a noble and divine mind, to pardon injuries. Behold how long-suffering God is, and how easily he is reconciled. Ps. 103 : 8. Consider the example of Christ, the Son of God, who, in the midst of his exquisite torments, like a patient lamb, did not so much as "open his mouth." Isa. 53 : 7. Contemplate the nature of the divine Spirit, who appeared in the form of a dove (Matt. 3 : 16), with a view that by such a representation he might teach us a dove-like meekness of mind, and recommend to us that tender simplicity of manners, which becomes a true Christian. With what patience did Moses bear the reproaches of the people, thus deserving to be called "very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth." Numb. 12 : 3. Remember also the conduct of David, and with what lenity of mind he heard the curses of Shimei. 2 Sam. 16 : 10.

5. True love teaches us to be angry with none but ourselves. True peace consists not in having much wealth, but in bearing patiently whatever goes against our nature. Should a madman rail at the sun, and curse it for being nothing but darkness, the sun would never be darkened by his reproachful language, but continue his course, and enlighten the world as before. So do thou also, and remember that there is no sweeter or better revenge than to forgive. Such wise and excellent rules were practised by many of the heathens themselves. Pericles, the Grecian orator, having patiently heard a man revile him for the space of a whole day, when night came on, kindly invited him to his house, and entertained him in a friendly manner, saying, "It is easier to speak evil of virtue than to possess it." Thus Phocion, general of the Athenians, when he had deserved well of his country, but through envy was adjudged to death, and was now about to undergo the sentence, being asked if he had any commands for his son, generously made answer: "None, except that he never take measures to revenge this injury, which I suffer of my country." The Emperor Titus being told that two brothers had conspired to cause his death, scrupled not to invite them both to sup with him; and in the morning went with them to the theatre, and placed himself betwixt them, to behold the play. Thus with marvellous clemency he overcame, at last, their baseness. And when Cato had committed suicide, Julius Cæsar said: "I have lost a glorious victory; for I had intended to forgive Cato all the evil that he has done to me."

6. But after all, as to the man who cannot be influenced by the unspeakable patience and meekness of the Son of God himself, to forgive and to love his enemies, him neither the example of the saints, nor of heathens, will ever be able to melt into love and forbearance. For what greater injustice and barbarity can be conceived, than that the Son of God should be so shamefully treated by the children of men, be scourged with stripes, crowned with thorns, spit upon, and loaded with all

the marks of scorn and derision; and lastly, be nailed on the cross? Nevertheless, he was able to bear, with an unshaken firmness, all the affronts and indignities which the malice of men was able to contrive; nay, and freely to pardon all this barbarous usage, and to pray, "Father, forgive them!" Luke 23:34.

7. And, truly, it was to this very end that our blessed Redeemer set his example before our eyes, that it might be an all-healing medicine for such spiritual diseases as have seized upon us; particularly, that it might abase all pride and loftiness, strengthen what is weak, supply what is defective, and correct what is evil and out of order. Can the distemper of pride be so violent, as not to be healed by the profound humility and lowliness of Christ? Heb. 5:8. Can avarice and covetousness prove so stubborn, as to baffle a remedy derived from that sacred poverty which appeared in Jesus Christ? What wrath is so fierce and vehement, that his meekness and lenity cannot mollify it? What desire of revenge so bitter and barbarous, which his patience cannot assuage and compose? What inhumanity so great and cruel, which the love of Christ cannot warm into a sweet and compassionate temper? And what heart can be so hard and obdurate, as not to be melted with the tears of Jesus Christ himself?

8. Who would not heartily wish to be made like God the Father, his Son, and the Holy Ghost, and to carry within him the excellent image of the sacred Trinity, which chiefly consists in love and forgiveness? For it is the highest of all the divine properties, to show compassion and mercy, to spare and to pardon, to be kind and gracious: and that must be undoubtedly one of the sublimest virtues, which makes us bear the nearest resemblance to the Most High God, and to all such persons as are the most conspicuous for goodness and virtue.

9. Lastly, the highest degree of virtue is, when a man, overcoming himself, is ready at any time to forget injuries, to pardon offences, and to show acts of favor and clemency. "He that is slow to anger," says Solomon, "is better than the mighty: and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city." Prov. 16:32. This is the highest step of the soul's ascension in her spiritual exercise; and when she has attained it, she rests in God, and is perfect in him.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

SHOWING HOW THE LOVE OF THE CREATOR SHOULD BE PREFERRED TO THAT OF ALL CREATURES; AND HOW OUR NEIGHBOR IS TO BE LOVED IN GOD.

If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.—1 JOHN 2:15.

THE heart of man is so constituted, that it cannot exist without love; it must love God, or the world, or self. If, therefore, man be under so strong a compulsion to love, let him direct his love to God, the supreme Good, and give up that affection to Him, who originally planted it in man, and

kindled it by his good Spirit; and who is still ready, at our fervent request, to rekindle this flame in the soul. His love to us is still the great principle that produces our love to him: and if his love to us meet with a suitable return on our side, then his love will, day by day, more ardently embrace us. For love begets love, according to the words of the Lord: "He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father." John 14:21.

2. Wherever the love of God resides, it disposes the soul freely to love all men, and not only to wish them well, but to do them all proper acts of love and beneficence; this being the property of that love which is grounded in God, and derived from him. Such a lover of God and of his neighbor, will never hurt or defraud any man in word or deed.

3. But the generality of the people are engrossed so much with the love of the world, that they never even admit the love of God into their hearts. This is plain from that false love with which they treat their neighbor, and which, under a show of friendship, seeks nothing but temporal advantage. Nothing in the world should be loved to such a degree, as to injure the love of God, or to come in competition with it; especially since there is so great a vanity and vileness in the world, and so great a worth and majesty in God, as that no comparison can ever be made betwixt them. As God infinitely excels all his creatures, so the love of God infinitely excels in holiness and dignity all the love we can bear to the creature, and is in no wise to be compared with it. No love to the creature ought to have sufficient weight with us, to make us offend the love of God, or to act in opposition to the same.

4. St. Paul says: "Who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof?" 1 Cor. 9:7. These words may not improperly be applied to this case. Who is more worthy of our love, than he that hath planted it in our hearts, and to whose love we owe our life and being? And as we all live by the love of God in Christ, so we should all adhere to this love, and make it our constant support even in the time of adversity. As a pilot in tempestuous weather, does not leave the ship to the mercy of the billows, but secures it by the anchor as well as he can, and stays its unruly motions; so in like manner, when the ship of our faith is tossed about in the sea of this world, and beset on all sides with the temptations of sin and vanity, of wrath and pride, of lust and avarice, we should hold to the love of Christ, and not suffer our hearts to be removed from that spiritual steadfastness, which is to carry us safe through all the tempests of this perverse and boisterous world. Romans 8:38, 39. Thus, when sin and death, the devil and hell, tribulation and persecution, and other miseries, threaten to overwhelm us, we are then to hold fast the love of God manifested in Christ Jesus. This divine love is like that mountain of salvation which was showed to Lot when he went out of Sodom, to escape the fire of that accursed place. Gen. 19:17.

5. The fire of lust, attended with everlasting flames and torments, is worse than that of Sodom. But the love and fear of God are a sovereign remedy against this profane love, and against any motion contrary to its pure and heavenly nature. It was this divine fear and love which preserved Joseph from the enticements of Potiphar's wife, and it still guards

us against the snares of an evil world. Gen. 39 : 9.

6. No man can love the world, but he who has never tasted the love of God; nor can any man hate, defraud, or circumvent his neighbor in anything, but he that does not love God from his heart. Whence arise all the anxious cares of this life, that grief and vexation of spirit with which poor mortals are disturbed? Surely, from nothing but from a want of the love of God. For the sweetness of divine love is so strong and effectual, that it mitigates the sense of all the miseries that are incident to this life. This love renders a man happy even in death itself.

7. Again, such is the nature of love, that it influences a man to lay aside all thoughts about anything else, and to fix his attention entirely on the beloved object, in order to possess and enjoy that alone. Why then are the children of men so much besotted with the things of this world? Why do they not entirely forget all wealth and honor, lust and riches, that they may enjoy him alone, whom they profess to love? This was in former times the constant practice of the holy men of God; whom the exquisite sweetness of this divine love had so much overpowered, as to make them forget the whole world, and even themselves also. Hence they were accounted fools in the world, when at the same time they were the wisest of all men; and their despisers most deserved the name of fools and madmen, as preferring a handful of frail and transient things, to everlasting and never-fading prosperity. Those are the greatest fools, who call the godly by that name, who, setting their love on things above, are deeply concerned to obtain and eternally enjoy them. 1 Cor. 3 : 19; 4 :10.

8. A true lover of God, loves God as if there were nothing in the whole universe to love but God alone. And for this reason, he finds all that in God, which he sought before in the world. For God hath in himself all things *essentially*, whatever we can desire. He is true honor and joy; he is peace and pleasure; he is wealth and magnificence. With him are light and life, glory and majesty, and all those delights that the heart of man can desire. All is found in a more substantial and transcendent manner in God, than it is in the world. If, therefore, thou lovest any creature, for the sake of *beauty*, transfer thy love to God, who is the fountain of all beauty. If thou wouldst love that which is *good*, fix thy love upon God, who is the eternal source of all goodness, nay, the essential *Good* itself, and without whom there is no goodness at all. Matt. 19 : 17. For whatever goodness the creature may seem to possess, it is but an inconsiderable drop derived out of the ocean of the infinite goodness of God, and which is besides impaired by many frailties and imperfections that adhere to it.

9. To conclude—is it not far better to set thy love and affections on God alone, the unexhausted fountain and well-spring of all perfection and goodness? The less a thing has of earthly gravity in it, the lighter it is, and the more easily is it carried upwards. So it is with the soul; the more it cleaves to earthly things, and is pressed down by them to the ground, the less ability has it to raise itself to God, and rejoice in its Maker. In a word, the less a man loves this world, the more will the love of God and of his neighbor prevail in the soul.

10. Hence it follows that he that

loveth God, cannot but love his neighbor also, and he that dares to offend God, will not forbear to offend his neighbor.

CHAPTER XXIX.

OF THAT RECONCILIATION TO OUR NEIGHBOR, WITHOUT WHICH GOD WITHDRAWS HIS GRACE.

First be reconciled to thy brother.—Matt. 5 : 24.

EVERY one who desires to be reconciled to God, must of necessity endeavor to reconcile himself to his neighbor; because God takes the injury which is offered to man, as offered to himself, and the evil done to man, as done to himself.

2. When, therefore, any one offends both God and man, he cannot be restored to the favor of God before he is reconciled to man his neighbor; for having offended them both, he must also be reconciled to both, which is expressly attested by Christ himself: "If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." Matt. 5 : 23, 24.

3. It will be needful, therefore, to say something further of the love of God and of our neighbor, and to show how impossible it is to separate the one from the other: and again, that this reconciliation, so joined together, proves the true source of brotherly love and affection.

4. This the beloved disciple has expressed as follows: "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, that he that loveth God love his brother also." 1 John 4 : 20, 21. So utterly impossible is it, that the love of God should subsist without the love of our neighbor. Hence, also, it follows, that he who truly and unfeignedly loves God, will also embrace his neighbor with the same sincere affection. And again, if the love which we profess to bear to God be hypocritical and false, then the love with which we seem to love our neighbor, will rise no higher than its principle, but prove false likewise. Therefore, the love of our neighbor is the test of our love of God, by the right application of which, the truth or falsehood of that love will easily be discovered.

5. This consideration gives us a true insight into the love of our neighbor, and that brotherly reconciliation which ought to attend it. There is a twofold object given by God to man, to which all the actions of his life are constantly to tend; namely, the love of God, and of our neighbor. Into this, all our endeavors ought finally to be resolved, and we ought to make a daily progress in this holy exercise; since we are to this very end, created, redeemed, and sanctified. In a word, Christ himself is the one and only scope in which all our actions ought to centre. Now, the more we approach to love, the more

we approach to Christ, and the better we imitate his unblamable life.

6. For this end God was made man, or, the Word was made flesh, that he might set before our eyes a most lovely and living image of his infinite love and kindness, and that from hence it might appear, that God was LOVE itself; love in His own immense, incomprehensible, and unsearchable essence; and that man, by viewing so amiable an object of love as is displayed in Christ Jesus, might be transformed into the same image day by day.

7. Furthermore, as, in Christ, God and man are united together by an indissoluble tie, so the love of God is so closely connected with the love of our neighbor, that the former cannot exist without the latter. Nay, the love of God and of our neighbor can be no more disjoined or put asunder, than the divine and human natures in Christ. And as he who injures the humanity of Christ cannot but affront his divinity also; so he who offends man, is in like manner guilty of offending the infinite God himself. We cannot be angry with our neighbor, without being, at the same time, angry with God!

8. We will illustrate what has been said, by the following comparison. When a circle is made, and from its centre a number of lines are drawn to the circumference, all these lines, though ever so distant in the circumference, meet together in the point, which is in the middle. Here they are all united in one, and all flow into one, be they ever so wide asunder, yea, even directly opposite one to the other. Not one of all the lines, let their number be ever so great, can be broken from the rest, without losing its communication with the centre itself, wherein they all meet. So God is a point, or a centre, whose circumference is everywhere, extending in a manner, to all men upon earth. Whoever presumes to break off the lines of his love from his neighbor, must, in like manner, disjoin and break them off from God at the same time. And as all these lines cohere and concur in the centre, and therein mutually affect one another, so is there a sort of central sympathy, and a fellow-feeling, as it were, of the sufferings of our neighbor, provided we be but all united in God, the great centre of all good Christians.

9. The truth of what has been said, is forcibly illustrated in the history of Job. When the tidings were brought him, that his temporal goods were destroyed, it appears that he quietly bore the loss of them, without giving any great sign of discontent at the appointments of Providence. He still continued to bless the Lord, and freely to own, that he who had given him his property, had also a right to take it away whenever he pleased. But when he was told, that he had also lost his children, then indeed it went to his heart: then he "arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground." Job. 1:20. So let every true Christian act when he hears of the calamity of his neighbor (here represented by the children of Job); knowing that he ought more to be affected with the misery of his neighbor, than with the loss of all his worldly substance. For it is the property of true love, to be moved with the miseries of other men more than with our own losses. O, happy men! if they would live together in mutual love and affection! Then frauds would cease; then injuries would be known no more, nor would there be any com-

plaint of unjust ways, or of underhand dealings.

10. In order that this might be the more deeply impressed on the heart, God was pleased to create but *one* man in the beginning, together with Eve, who was soon afterwards made. Gen. 2 : 21, 22. This was done, that all mankind, springing up from one original stock, and, as it were, from one root, might all unite in mutual kindness and brotherly affection with one another. This is the reason why God did not create a multitude of men in the beginning, but one only; whereas he created many beasts, trees and herbs at once.

11. The love which God commands us to pursue, is of that agreeable nature, and of that incomparable sweetness, that it does not in the least burden either a man's soul or body. Nay, it renders the mind easy under every event, is most agreeable to our very nature, and in every respect attended with a quiet and blessed life. But if the same God who has enjoined thee to love thy neighbor, had commanded thee to hate him, thou wouldest then have had cause to complain of hard usage, and of a far heavier burden than that which love can possibly impose upon thee. For the spirit of hatred and revenge is a tormentor of the soul, and a daily grief and vexation to those that are enslaved by it. On the contrary, love refreshes the whole man; and is so far from weakening or destroying body or soul (which is the common effect of hatred and envy), that it is a great preserver of both, and exhilarates them by the healing influence which it carries with it. In a word, to those that love God, it is a pleasure to love their neighbor also; but those who do not love God think it a hard and difficult task to embrace their neighbor with brotherly love.

12. But if thy depraved nature should still find it a hard task to love thy neighbor, then consider how much harder it will be to be banished forever from the presence of God, and to endure the pangs of hell to all eternity. Wretched is the man, who makes so sad a choice as to prefer hell-torments to a friendly reconciliation. Our own experience would soon convince us, if we made the trial, that as by faith we enjoy solid peace with God (as the apostle assures us, Rom. 5:1); so by Christian love and reconciliation we enjoy peace with men, together with much ease and tranquillity of heart: whereas, on the contrary, a mind full of rancor and malice frets itself, and has no other reward to expect than the lashes of an unruly conscience.

13. The sum of all this is: Every virtue rewards its followers with peace of conscience; and every vice punishes those that commit it with the recompense which they deserve. Every virtue exalts those that practise it; and every vice covers its slaves with shame.

14. With regard to the order and method by which we are to proceed in working out a sound reconciliation with our offended neighbor, the Scripture is explicit. The terms of reconciliation are these: 1. The offender is to confess his sin to his neighbor whom he has offended. 2. He is faithfully to restore that of which he has defrauded his neighbor; that is, he ought to return not only the *principal*, but also the *fifth* part over and above it. 3. If there be none to receive it, he is then to offer it unto the Lord himself. Numb. 5 : 7, 8.

15. This restitution of things unlawfully taken away, is commanded

in such strong and expressive words, as to show that it is absolutely a necessary part of unfeigned repentance. St. Augustine has thus expressed his mind on this subject: "The sin is not remitted, unless the thing unlawfully taken away be restored."—"When the thing that is taken away may be restored, and is not restored, there is no true, but a feigned repentance."

16. And truly it is the property of unfeigned repentance to contemn all earthly things, and count them as loss (Phil. 3:8), in respect of that abounding grace which is bestowed upon a penitent sinner. Of this we have a glorious instance in Zaccheus, and in his conversion to God (Luke 19:8); who has had, however, comparatively few followers in this age. Sound conversion to God cleanses the heart, and purifies the conscience, by faith in Christ; it breaks the power of sin, and by influencing a man to restore such things as are wrongfully detained, not only clears the heart before God, but also the outward conduct in the eye of the world. For in the heart and conscience a man is a thief before God, as long as he keeps any thing back that is taken away, however he may cease to steal hereafter. Therefore, in order that repentance may prove true, and the conscience be freed from guilt, all possible restitution is to be made: or if a man be not able to make full restitution, he ought fervently to implore the Lord, that he himself, in his stead, would restore the things taken from his neighbor, and thus do justice.

17. Since a sinner is thus bound in a twofold respect to God and to his neighbor, in order that his repentance may be full and efficacious, it is required that both be satisfied. God does not accept any man's repentance, unless he be first reconciled to his neighbor. Therefore, it is to no purpose if thou shouldest say unto God: "Merciful God, I confess that I have offended and injured my neighbor; I have damaged him by wicked usury and fraud; and have dealt so with him, as I would not that another should deal with me: which iniquity I humbly entreat thee, O Lord, to pardon for thy dear Son's sake." Be not deceived; God will not be mocked! He repels thy prayer, and saith: "Restore first that which with fraud and usury thou hast taken from thy neighbor, and then thy pardon shall be ready." Not as if a man merited the pardon of God by this restitution; this is a debt due to his neighbor, and how can he pretend to merit any thing by that restitution which he is so engaged to make, and which the law of God expressly enjoins? For thus hath the Lord commanded: "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." Matt. 7:12. "For with the same measure that ye mete withal, it shall be measured to you again." Luke 6:38.

18. The same truth is confirmed by the following Scriptures: "Leave thy gift (oblation or sacrifice) before the altar and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." Matt. 5:24. "Cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Isa. 1:16–18. And again, by the same prophet the Lord thus reasons: "Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy bur-

dens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked that thou cover him, and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh? Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily; and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the Lord shall be thy rearward." Isa. 58:6–8.

19. All these Scriptures, with one consent, proclaim this great truth,—that God will not accept the repentance of any man, or hear his prayer, or regard his alms and oblations, unless he be first reconciled to his neighbor, and make him all the restitution that is in his power.

CHAPTER XXX.

OF THE FRUITS OF LOVE

Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.—1 Cor. 13:4–7.

EVEN as the tree of life stood in the midst of Paradise (Gen. 2:9); so Jesus Christ stands in the Paradise of the Christian Church, in order that all believers might derive life and strength from him. The whole substance of the Christian religion consists in *faith* and *love*. As by *faith* in Christ, the life of a Christian is rendered acceptable to God (the life which he lives being not so much his own, as the life of Christ in him); so Love proves the fruitful principle of all such charitable acts as relate to his neighbor. And so true is it, that all virtues, how shining soever they may be, are of no account without charity; that even faith itself is counted dead if it be without love. James 2:17. For although faith, as it respects justification, has no regard to works, either preceding, accompanying, or following it, but to Jesus Christ only, on whom it lays hold; yet is that faith but mere show and pretence which is not attended with love, though it should even work miracles. For as a body destitute of a soul is dead; so the inward spiritual man, if he have not love, is dead in all his members. Therefore hath the apostle declared, that faith should work by love. Gal. 5:6. It is true that faith justifies a sinner without works (Rom. 4:6): yet when it performs the functions of mutual love among men, it will necessarily be accompanied with a train of good works; this being the true test by which genuine faith can be distinguished from all counterfeits. This is that faith which works by love; this is the tree which bears abundance of fruits, as from the following considerations will farther appear.

2. The *first* of these fruits is long-suffering. "Charity suffereth long."

The nature and constitution of this virtue no one ever more fully expressed than Christ himself, the true tree of life, whose goodly and salutary fruits we ought to eat, and to convert into our own substance and nature. As he by his wonderful long-suffering bore the malice of the world, that thereby sinners might be brought to repentance (Rom. 2 : 4); so do thou also, O man, order thy life and manners, that it may appear evident, that the meek and gentle Christ lives in thee, and that thou mayest continue in him, as a member firmly united to its head.

3. The *second* fruit is kindness. "Charity is kind." This virtue was also most eminently seen in Christ Jesus, and in that example which he hath set us. David says: "Grace is poured into thy lips." Ps. 45 : 2. And the Evangelist tells us, that "they wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth." Luke 4 : 22. To these words do thou give attention, O man, and follow this great pattern of love and benignity, that so Christ may also speak by thy mouth, and that thou mayest remain united to him in perpetual charity.

4. The *third* fruit is, not to be envious and revengeful, but to be ready to remit any offence whatsoever. "Charity envieth not." Nothing is more agreeable to the nature of God, than to forgive. "The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. He will not always chide, neither will he keep his anger forever. He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities." Ps. 103 : 8–10. "If the wicked will turn from all his sins that he committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die. All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him; in his righteousness that he hath done, he shall live." Ezek. 18 : 21, 22. "Is Ephraim my dear son? Is he a pleasant child? For since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still; therefore my bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord." Jer. 31 : 20. And lastly, this divine goodness is most clearly expressed by Isaiah, and represented as the very character of God: "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions, for my own sake, and will not remember thy sins." Isa. 43 : 25. Therefore be thou in this respect also like unto the merciful God. Forgive, I say, and forget the trespasses of thy neighbor, that so, in like manner, Christ may also forgive thine offences and transgressions. It is then that the same mind is in thee which was also in Christ. And in this order alone thou shalt obtain fellowship with him.

5. The *fourth* fruit is candor. "Charity vaunteth not itself." A kind and charitable man does not misjudge his neighbor, vaunt it over him, rashly censure him, or disingenuously deride him before others. True love is altogether averse to these unfair proceedings. Whoever sincerely loves his neighbor, shows his heart in his countenance, and does all things ingenuously, and without guile. A visible example hereof Christ himself hath left us, whose deportment was equal both to friends and enemies, and who from the bottom of his heart endeavored most earnestly to promote the salvation of mankind. Let this be an example to thee, O man, and follow in thy Master's footsteps, that so the candor which was in Christ, may also

shine forth in thy life and conduct. As the Lord has most heartily espoused our good and interest, so ought we in like manner, to do the same among ourselves also; if we wish to partake of the nature of Christ, and to be united to him, as living members to their Head and Saviour.

6. The *fifth* fruit is, not to be "puffed up." Charity is not of a haughty and supercilious temper. It is not swelled with high conceit on account of its own deeds and performances. Behold again thy Lord Jesus! When a woman, in a great concourse of people, lifted up her voice and said: "Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked," "Yea," replied he, "rather blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it" (Luke 11:27, 28); humbly removing from himself that praise which was entirely due to him, and resigning it to those that truly loved the Lord. If thou also resolvest to do this, then verily the humble Jesus lives in thee, and thou livest in him; it being the constant character of true charity, to transfer the praises of men to another whom it esteems more worthy of them.

7. The *sixth* effect of charity is, "not to behave itself unseemly." A man endued with love, is not easily soured with discontent, or with any morose humor. His conversation is easy, obliging, and so concordant with all the offices of love and humanity, that the kindness residing within may even be read in his countenance. Of this sweetness of temper, the Lord Jesus hath left us a most bright and holy pattern. He did all with a spirit of mildness; and when he conversed with sinners, then pity and compassion visibly appeared in his very mien and aspect. This sweet temper of Christ ought also to be transfused into our souls, so that our life may prove a transcript of this most blessed original.

8. The *seventh* fruit of true love is, "not to seek her own." A true Christian has by love obtained such enlargement and liberty of soul, as to serve his fellow-creatures freely, without any view to self-interest. Nothing is more pleasing to him than to do good to all without the least expectation of gain. This pure and disinterested love originally dwells in God Almighty. He gives all things freely, without receiving any profit at all. He commands us to fear and worship him, for no other reason than to make us proper objects of his divine love and benignity. And, lo! what a glorious pattern of disinterested love Christ has set before us! Matt. 20:28. As a tree, without respect of persons, imparts its fruit to all in the most ample and universal manner; so has Christ, and God in Christ, given himself unto us as the greatest and most excellent Good. Go now, O man! and practise the same virtue; that so Christ, the ever-living *vine*, may bud in thee, and that thou mayest become a fruitful plantation of the Lord. Isaiah 61:3.

9. The *eighth* fruit of true love is, "not to be easily provoked." A man that has tasted of true love, is not apt to entertain any bitterness, much less to vent it by cursing and railing words. Contemplate again the life of Jesus, who did not so much as open his mouth against his enemies, nor pour forth any bitter and vehement speeches, but gave blessing and life to those that hated him. Isaiah 11:3; 42:2. And though he, indeed, denounced wrath against Chorazin, Capernaum, and Bethsaida, and uttered many woes against the Pharisees (Luke 10:13;

11:42); yet this did not proceed from a bitter or revengeful temper; but was no more than a serious and earnest exhortation to true and unfeigned repentance, that so the offenders might at last be saved. Therefore, let us be cautious, lest any root of bitterness should at any time spring up in us, and so hinder our charity, and thus many be offended. Heb. 12:15.

10. The *ninth* fruit of charity is, "to think no evil." This is also the property of God Almighty, as he himself testifies: "For I know the thoughts that I think towards you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart." Jer. 29:11, 13. Whence it follows that whosoever has thoughts of peace towards his neighbor, has the mind of Christ, and is animated and influenced by his Spirit.

11. The *tenth* fruit is, "Love rejoiceth not in iniquity," nor has it pleasure in the injury or oppression of good men, as Shimei had when David fled before Absalom. 2 Sam. 16:5, 6. On the contrary, true love imitates Christ Jesus, who, with a tender compassion, beholding with a mournful countenance, the fall of Peter (Luke 22:61), raised and reclaimed him, and thereby fulfilled the words of the Psalmist: "God raises them that are bowed down." Ps. 146:8. And how did he deplore the evil which was hanging over the men of Judea, and the destruction of their temple and city! Luke 19:41; 15:4. With what fervency, with what a hearty desire, did he bring his wandering sheep into the right way; and with what a sweet and gentle voice did he allure them home! Let us imitate so great a master of love; and if any one be overtaken in a fault, let us bewail his case, instruct him in the spirit of meekness, and bear his burden, that so we may fulfil the law of Christ. Gal. 6:2. For he did first bear himself the burden of our sins, that we, being made his living members, might be formed to the same temper by him, who is the Head of the Church.

12. The *eleventh* property of charity is, that it "rejoiceth in the truth," and is exceedingly pleased with a Christian order of things. Of this we have an example in Christ Jesus, who, at the return of the seventy disciples, rejoiced in spirit and praised his Father for the success which had attended their function. Luke 10:21. Thus also the angels in heaven rejoice (as Christ himself teaches us), over the conversion of a sinner. Luke 15:10. Whoever, therefore, seriously lays to heart the practice of so Christian a virtue, manifests thereby an angelical temper of mind: nay, it is a proof that the very mind of Christ, yea, of God himself, resides in that soul.

13. The *twelfth* fruit of charity is, to "bear all things," in order to preserve the bond of peace and of mutual friendship. Love patiently bears the infirmities of others, after the example of St. Paul, who was made weak with the weak, that he might profit the weak: nay, he was made all things, if by any means he might be an instrument to save some. 1 Cor. 9:22. The same heavenly love *believeth* all things, and suspects no evil of its neighbor; *hopeth* all things, praying and desiring that peace and happiness may constantly accompany our fellow-creatures. And, lastly, true love *endureth all things* for the sake of benefiting a neighbor; all which our blessed Redeemer, by his own example, has most feelingly taught us. He bore all manner of reproaches

and injuries for our sins; he underwent most inhuman scourgings and buffetings, with extreme poverty, that in him, and by him, we might obtain everlasting joy and honor.

14. The *thirteenth* fruit of love is, "not to faint or be weary," in doing good. Herein it is like God, whose mercy is from everlasting to everlasting upon those that fear him. Ps. 103 : 17; Luke 1 : 50. God expects and waits that he may be gracious unto us. Isa. 30 : 18. In order that he might have mercy on us, he rose up to spare us, and he loves to be exalted in showing mercy. His love is stronger than death, which many waters are not able to quench, and from which nothing can ever separate us. Cant. 8 : 7. He hath mercy on us with everlasting mercies. And though he declares, on a certain occasion, that he is "weary with repenting" (Jer. 15 : 6); yet is this confined to those only who wilfully reject the tender of his mercy, who despise his grace, and abuse his goodness: and in no wise affects those that heartily fear him. "The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee." Isa. 54 : 10. After this standard of divine mercy, we ought also to regulate the love we bear to our neighbor, so that it may never fail or faint in acts of humanity and kindness; no, not even in those which we are bound to bestow on our very enemies. As Christ did, so ought we, from a compassionate and never-failing love, to pray, "Father, forgive them." Luke 23 : 34.

15. In a word, Love is the greatest, the best, and the noblest of all virtues. First, because God himself is love. 1 John 4 : 16. Secondly, because it is the fulfilling and the summary or comprehension of the whole law. Rom. 13 : 10. Thirdly, because it is eternal and never-failing, so that it is not like faith and hope, which vanish away when that happiness appears which is the end of faith. 1 Cor. 13 : 8. Fourthly, because all good works and services done to our neighbor without it, are vain and of no account before God. And lastly, because love gives us an assurance here, that by faith in Christ we shall inherit life eternal hereafter. Hence it follows, that Christian love must excel all other gifts and graces whatsoever, and that our main concern ought to centre in so divine a virtue. Nothing, certainly, can be greater than experimentally to know that love of Christ which "passeth all knowledge," that we may be filled with all the fulness of God, and the fruits of love. Eph. 3 : 19.

CHAPTER XXXI.

PRIDE AND SELF-LOVE CORRUPT AND DESTROY EVEN THE BEST AND NOBLEST GIFTS.

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal, etc.—1 COR. 13 : 1, etc.

LEST any should wonder why St. Paul sets forth the virtue of charity with so many high and eminent praises; we are to consider that God is LOVE; and that, consequently, the same praise belongs to both: nor can there be a greater virtue in God or man, than love.

2. But our love is twofold: the one true, living, sincere, and undefiled; the other false, polluted, hypocritical, and selfish. The former of these St. Paul has most amply described, and exhibited all the fruits and properties that attend it, of which we have already spoken. The latter kind, which is false and polluted, may sometimes seem, indeed, to promote the glory of God, and the profit of mankind; yet inwardly, and in the heart, it seeks nothing either in word or deed, but private honor and interest only. Now whatever flows from this fountain of false love, proceeds not from God, but from the devil; for it is a poison infecting the very best of works, and the most excellent gifts conferred on man.

3. As a flower, that in sight, taste, and smell, is sweet and beautiful, is rejected with disgust, if it contain secret venom, because it is hurtful to man; so, though a man be adorned with the most exquisite parts, and the very gifts of angels themselves, if he be void of charity, and full of avarice, pride, self-love, and self-honor, then all those gifts not only prove of no value, but become pernicious to him that possesses them. For whatever is really good, always proceeds from God himself, so as to begin and end in him. Whatever deviates from this *beginning* and *end*, can never be really good, nor acceptable to the Lord. That which this good God works in thy heart, is truly good, and only good: but it is quite otherwise if self-love, self-honor, and self-interest, bear the sway in thy soul, and influence the actions of thy life. All that springs from so depraved a principle, must be of the same nature with the principle whence it flows, corrupt and defiled, since it does not proceed from God as from its original cause and moving principle; God alone is good. Matt. 19 : 17.

4. It is said that it was the wish of a certain saint of old, that he might be of no other use to God, than his own right hand was to himself; an *instrument*, ready to give and to receive what was fit, and this in the manner directed by the soul; arrogating neither honor nor profit to itself. And, indeed, it is right that we all should be of the same temper. For as all things come freely from God to us, so we should return all things freely to our neighbor, from a principle of pure love, and in true singleness of heart, without any desire of glory or self-interest. For as God alone is the author of all that is good; so it is but just that all honor and glory should be given to him alone. Man is but an in-

strument, made fit to receive and to deliver what God bestows upon him.

5. Now if a man be without this sincere and pure love, he is, notwithstanding all his gifts and endowments, a mere nothing, and of no account in the sight of God. Though he speak with the tongues of angels; though he prophesy, and know all mysteries, and have such faith as even to remove mountains; and though he should moreover bestow all that he has among the poor, and give his body to be burned; all this will avail him nothing at last, and stand him in no stead when he is to have his trial. 1 Cor. 13 : 1–3.

6. The reason is plain. Self-love, self-honor, and self-interest, are of the devil, who thereby procured his own downfall from heaven. For after God had created Lucifer a most glorious angel, and adorned him with the most excellent gifts of wisdom, light, and glory, he began to pride himself in his gifts, and to love, honor, and exalt himself. This self-complacency proved the very first step to his ruin. He turned his love from God to himself, and was deservedly driven from his principality, together with all such as adhered to him, and whom he had infected with the same pride and self-love. Not contented with his estate or principality, he aspired too high, and lost all which the Creator had conferred upon him, according to St. Jude : "The angels kept not their first estate." Jude 6. See also Col. 2 : 15.

7. By the same sin which had effected his own ruin, Satan attempted the ruin of man, namely, by diverting him from the love of God to the love of himself. Hereby self-love and self-honor began to act in man, and influenced him to seek equality with God himself. Hence he was cast out of Paradise, as Lucifer had been before cast out of heaven, leaving to us all the heritage of pride and self-love. And this is the fall of Adam, which all men in themselves repeat; and which is transmitted through flesh and blood, from one generation to another.

8. The remedy by which a thorough cure may be wrought in fallen man, is wholly to be sought in the precious *merit of Christ* apprehended by faith. By this we are renewed in Christ, and the flesh is crucified, with its sinful desires. Then we love ourselves no more, but on the contrary, even *hate* ourselves. Luke 14 : 26. We do not honor or extol, but deny and mortify ourselves. We no more seek our own glory and interest; but, denying all we have, we withdraw our pleasure and trust from everything whatsoever it be (Luke 14 : 33), and manfully fight with our own flesh and blood. Whosoever refuses to comply with these terms, can in no case be a disciple of Christ; since this is the only means by which the natural degeneracy of our heart is to be subdued, and a sound conversion is to be effected.

9. Since it was utterly impossible that man, by his own natural strength, should restore himself (for of himself, he can do nothing but love himself, boast of himself, and seek his own ends and interest; or, to sum up all in a word, *commit sin*); God, in his infinite mercy, was moved to commiserate man's fallen condition, and to make the very beginning of the work of man's restoration. In order to this, the Son of God took the form of a man upon him, thereby to renew our nature, that, being regenerated *by* him, *in* him, and *from* him, we might become new creatures. For as in Adam we are dead both bodily and spiritually, so we ought to rise again in Christ, and

be renewed both in spirit and body. 1 Cor. 15 : 22. And as by a *carnal* descent from Adam, sin, self-love and pride cleave to our nature; so in Christ, by a *spiritual* birth, we must be justified, and inherit by faith his righteousness. And, as by our carnal birth, we draw our sin from Adam, especially self-love, pride, and ambition; so from Christ, by faith, and by the Holy Ghost, our nature is to be renewed, cleansed, and sanctified. All self-love, pride, and ambition, are to die in us, in order that we may attain a new heart and a new spirit from Christ, even as we received our sinful flesh from Adam. And with reference to this new birth in us, Christ is called the *everlasting Father*. Isaiah 9 : 6.

10. Hence it follows, that all the works of a Christian, together with his gifts and talents, ought to proceed purely from the new birth, if ever they be acceptable to God; and that they ought to spring from faith, from Christ, and from the Holy Ghost. Wherever this principle is wanting, there the most excellent parts, and even miracles themselves, are of no account at all before God. So with respect to our neighbor, all things ought to be done in Christian charity (1 Cor. 16 : 14), without any view to private gain, or honor; as a pattern of which God has set his Son before us (John 13 : 15), in whom there was no spot of self-love or arrogance; no desire of profit or praise; nay, in whom nothing resided but pure and undefiled love and humility. He is *inwardly* to live in our hearts by faith, and *outwardly* to be expressed in our whole life and conduct. It is then, that all our works, words, and knowledge, wholly proceed from Christ, as from their original source. Without this divine principle settled within the mind, all our gifts and works, be they ever so high and angelical, are insignificant, and of no worth. For wherever self-love sways the soul, there must be a hatred of God; where pride rules, it engenders a contempt of God; and how can works springing from so vitiated a principle, ever be acceptable to the Lord?

11. Let us, therefore, most fervently beseech the Lord, to give us true faith and sincere love; a love not defiled with any desire of vain honor, profit, and glory. Whenever this divine temper is obtained and established in the heart, it is followed with this happy effect, that thereby not only great and illustrious endowments and works are made acceptable to God, but also the least and meanest of all, even the gift of a cup of cold water. Matt. 10 : 42. For a small work proceeding from sincere love and humility, is far more excellent than all the splendid works that are raised on no other foundation than pride and self-love.

CHAPTER XXXII.

GREAT GIFTS DO NOT DEMONSTRATE A MAN TO BE A CHRISTIAN, BUT FAITH THAT WORKS BY LOVE.

The kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.—1 Cor. 4 : 20.

ST. PAUL, intending to describe a Christian in a few words, says: "The end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned." 1 Tim. 1 : 5. As if he had said: To be a Christian, and to render ourselves acceptable in the sight of God, requires nothing hard and lofty; no worldly wisdom, no human learning, no great parts, no gift of prophesying, no eloquence, no knowledge of tongues, no miracles: but only that a man have faith in Christ; that he do all things in love, and with a mind wholly resigned to God; and that he suffer himself to be led and governed by the good Spirit of God.

2. We should not, therefore, regard how many languages a man speaks, or how eloquent he is in his delivery; but how he shows forth his faith by love, and by the mortification of the flesh. "For they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts" (Gal. 5 : 24): under which are included self-esteem, self-love, covetousness, vain-boasting, ambition, self-interest, and all else that is carnal. To which purpose also St. Paul says, that "the kingdom of God is not in word," or in great gifts and endowments, "but in power" (1 Cor. 4 : 20); that is, in a living exercise of Christian virtues, of faith, love, meekness, patience, and humility.

3. Therefore, no man is in favor with God, or is saved, because he is endued with brighter gifts than others; but because he is found in Christ Jesus by faith, and lives in him as a new creature. 2 Cor. 5 : 17. Great gifts do not make us happy. If a man had attained to gifts so extraordinary and marvellous as never any possessed before, yet would he be certainly cast away, unless he lived at the same time in the exercise of daily repentance in Christ, in a ready abnegation of the world, and in a denial of himself, and of all his selfish desires. Nay, if he did not hate and forsake himself, so as to place his whole confidence in God alone, and to cleave to his grace, as an infant to the breast of the mother, he would be forever banished from the presence of God, notwithstanding all his gifts and all his endowments.

4. It is certain that gifts and parts are not bestowed upon us in order to make us great here, and happy hereafter; but they are wholly dispensed for the edification of the Church. When the seventy disciples, at their return, said with joy, "Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name" (Luke 10 : 17, 20); our Lord replied: "In this rejoice not (for neither miracles nor gifts shall save you), but rejoice rather because your names are written in heaven." By faith Moses was saved, not by his miracles. Aaron's eloquence did not the more endear him to God. And Miriam, the sister of Moses, who was

endued with the gift of prophecy, and by whom the Spirit of the Lord spoke, was struck with the leprosy. Numb. 12 : 10.

5. The apostles themselves did not enter into the kingdom of heaven because of the miracles which they performed, nor on account of the gift of tongues conferred upon them, but because they *believed* in Christ, the Saviour of the world. Those of the first rank, and those of the meanest condition, must tread in the same way of faith and humility, of repentance and mortification, and become new creatures in Christ through faith and love; in whom Christ also may live again by this faith. Whoever neglects this order, cannot expect to be accounted one of the family of Christ.

6. Christian love is that new vital principle by which a man is actuated to do good. This is attended with the life of Christ, and the powerful indwelling of the divine Spirit. To this purpose the apostle desires, that we may be filled with all the fulness of God (Eph. 3 : 19): and St. John tells us, that "God is love, and that he who dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him." 1 John 4 : 16. Whoever, therefore, feels the love of God shed abroad in his heart, feels no less than God himself there. However, in order that we might not deceive ourselves with a false and hypocritical, instead of a true and divine love, the apostle has drawn up the character thereof, and represented it as a tree adorned with numerous branches: "Love," says he, "is patient, kind," etc. 1 Cor. 13. All which are the essential properties of Christians, and consequently the life of the new man.

7. To sum up all in a few words, God the Father is love, God the Son is love, God the Holy Ghost is love. The whole spiritual body of Christ, which is the Church, is also knit together by the bond of love; so that there is but one God, one Christ, one Spirit, one baptism, one faith (Eph. 4 : 5, 6); and lastly, eternal life itself shall be nothing else but eternal love.

8. Whoever, therefore, does not live in love, is certainly a dead member of the body of Christ. As a dead member is not supported by that natural heat which nourishes the body and every living member thereof, nor is sustained with proper food for its daily growth and increase; so a man who does not live in Christian love is destitute of spiritual life, and is dead to God and to Christ. He is without faith, a withered, lifeless branch; he has no part in God, in Christ, and the Holy Ghost, in the holy Christian Church, and in life eternal; and will be excluded from the presence of that GOD, who has declared himself to be LOVE.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

GOD HAS NO RESPECT TO THE WORKS OF ANY ONE; BUT JUDGES OF WORKS ACCORDING TO THE HEART.

Every way of a man is right in his own eyes; but the Lord pondereth the hearts.—Prov. 21:2.

WHEN the prophet Samuel, by the commandment of God, went to anoint David king, he entered the house of Jesse, and offered to anoint his first-born: but the Lord said to him: "Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him. For the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart." 1 Sam. 16:7.

2. By this example God declares, on the one hand, that he has no regard to any man's person, be he ever so great and eminent, when his heart is destitute of piety, love, faith, and humility; and on the other, that he esteems persons and works according to the inward spirit and intention of the mind, and thence allows or disallows them, according to Prov. 21:2. Moreover, all gifts and endowments, how considerable soever they be, and how admirable, great, and glorious they may appear in the eyes of men, in nowise please the Lord, unless they be accompanied with a pure heart, a heart that has a steady respect to the honor of God and the profit and edification of our neighbor; and which, at the same time, is freed from pride and arrogance, from self-love, and self-interest, and any of those sinister views which are apt to mingle with the works of a Christian.

3. Consider the example of Lucifer, the fairest and most glorious angel which heaven contained. No sooner did he stain the gifts of God with self-love and self-honor (not considering that he was bound to advance thereby the glory of God, who had conferred them upon him), than he was transformed into a devil, and, being cast down from heaven, was shut out from the glorious presence of God.

4. If ever, therefore, our works shall be acceptable to God, they ought to proceed from pure faith towards God, and sincere love to our neighbor, being cleared from the spots of self-love, self-honor, and self-interest, as much as possibly can be in this state of infirmity. To this end St. Paul says, "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal" (1 Cor. 13:1): that is, I am altogether vain and unprofitable. In truth, God regards not fluency of speech, but an humble heart; not arts, learning, wit, or ability, but he weighs the *spirit* of a man, whether it be bent upon promoting its own honor and interest, or the glory of God and the profit of men. Nor does God regard a faith by which mountains might be removed, and the eyes of the beholders be attracted from all sides, if a man seek thereby his own honor and glory. But the Lord looks with the greater affection upon him who "is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembles at his word." Isaiah 66:2. In short, if a man dis-

tribute all that he has to the poor, or give up his body to be burned, it will be all to no purpose, if the act be sullied with self-honor and self-complacency. It is the heart only and the inward intention of the mind, which the Lord regards. This fully appears from many instances recorded in Scripture.

5. Both David and Saul attended the service of God, but with a different effect. 1 Sam. 15 : 9; 2 Sam. 24 : 25. David, Manasseh (2 Chron. 33 : 13), Nebuchadnezzar, and Peter, after repentance, obtained mercy; Saul, Pharaoh, and Judas, on the contrary, fell short of it, on account of the different principle which swayed their minds. Pharaoh (Exod. 9 : 27) and Saul (1 Sam. 15 : 24), no less than Manasseh, used the same prayer, "Lord, I have sinned!" but they received different rewards. The prayer of Hezekiah, Joshua, and Gideon (Isa. 38 : 7; Josh. 10 : 12; Judg. 6 : 37), by which they required a sign from heaven, is approved and praised; the Pharisees doing the same are rejected and reproved. Matt. 12 : 38; 16 : 4. The Publican and the Pharisee prayed both in the temple; but both are not approved. Luke 18 : 14. The Ninevites fasted (Jonah 3 : 5, 10); the Jews and Pharisees did the same (Matt. 6 : 16): but the former were received, and the latter rejected. "Wherefore (say they) have we fasted, and thou seest not?" Isa. 58 : 3. The poor widow, who cast into the treasury but two mites, is praised by Christ; whereas, he that gave more is not. Luke 21 : 3. Herod and Zaccheus both rejoice at the sight of Christ; but they had most different rewards. Luke 19 : 6; 23 : 8.

6. All this proceeds from no other cause than the heart, and that moving principle by which it is swayed, and which God chiefly regards. He accepts those works only which flow from unfeigned faith, sincere love, and true humility; for whatever our gifts or works may be, if pride, self-love, and the contagion of filthy lucre, infect them, they are at once rejected by the Lord.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

SHOWING THAT GOD ALONE, WITHOUT ANY HUMAN AID, IS THE AUTHOR OF OUR SALVATION, AND THAT WE ARE TO SUBMIT UNRESERVEDLY TO HIS GRACE; ALSO, THAT CHRIST'S MERIT IS NOT IMPUTED TO THE IMPENITENT.

But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.—1 COR. 1 : 30.

IN this impressive sentence, St. Paul teaches us that all things necessary for our salvation are merited by Christ Jesus our Lord. When we were ignorant of the way of life, he was made *wisdom* unto us; when we were sinners, he was made our *righteousness;* when we were an abomination before God, he was made our *sanctification;* and when we were in a state of damnation, he became our *redemption.*

2. It is therefore most certain, that

man does not contribute so much as one jot to his salvation. Sin, indeed, man could commit of himself, but he was not able to justify himself again; he could lose, but not recover himself; kill, but not restore to life; he could submit himself to the devil, but could not shake off his spiritual fetters. As a dead body cannot quicken itself again, so men "being dead in sins" (Eph. 2 : 1, 5), as the Apostle declares, cannot raise themselves again to life.

3. We did not contribute anything towards our creation, neither do we perform anything towards our redemption, regeneration, and sanctification, which are far greater transactions than the creation itself.

4. Hence it was necessary, that the Son of God should take human nature upon him, to recover all that was lost in Adam, and to revive those that were dead in sins and trespasses.

5. That this may be the better understood, we ought to represent to ourselves the traveller in the Gospel, who, falling among thieves, was cruelly wounded and bruised by them, and at last utterly disabled from helping himself again. Luke 10 : 30. Him, therefore, the good Samaritan receives into his arms, binds up his wounds, sets him on his beast, takes him to an inn, and omits nothing that a faithful physician could administer to a sick and wounded person. And as the traveller showed himself obedient to his physician, and strictly followed the directions prescribed by him; so we ought to act if we desire to be healed of our disease. We ought to *suffer* the healing hand of the Lord, and not to resist, when he attempts the cleansing of our wounds; and when, after having poured in wine and oil, he binds them up. To obtain the blessed effect of these spiritual operations, we must wholly resign ourselves to him, who alone is able to save us; and then we may trust to the goodness of God, that on his side he will not fail to restore us to health and soundness.

6. No sooner does a sinner repent than he begins his happy return towards the Lord, grieving for his former transgressions, and suffering that his wounds be washed with the sharp wine of the law, and the oil of consolation. Whoever complies with these terms, in him, Christ, by his grace, works an unfeigned faith, attended with all the fruits it produces,—righteousness, life, peace, joy, comfort, and salvation, and thus "worketh in him both to will and to do, of his good pleasure." Phil. 2 : 13.

7. But it is not in the power of man by nature to forsake sin. The Scripture calls the natural man a "servant of sin" (John 8 : 34), and one that is "sold under sin" (Rom. 7 : 14), who can do nothing but sin; and the prophet says, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good that are accustomed to do evil." Jer. 13 : 23. But "the grace of God that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men (by the Gospel), teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." Tit. 2 : 11, 12. This is offered us by the word of God; and it is this grace which excites, teaches, and allures fallen man; which urges and influences him to renounce sin, and to submit to the discipline of grace. And these divine admonitions, furnished through the Word, fully agree with the inward testimony of the conscience; so that a man is convinced both from without and from within of his sinful life, and of the necessity of quitting it, in order to

preserve his soul from everlasting destruction, for whoever lives in sin, lives in opposition to God and his own conscience.

8. When a man yields to the suggestions and exhortations of divine grace, and, proving obedient to the Word, begins to withdraw from his vicious life, then the grace of God endows him with all those virtues which the Gospel requires. It is then that faith springs up in the soul, the original principle of all other virtues. This is followed by love, and all Christian graces, which grow as so many fruits on the tree of faith. It is then, also, that light begins to shine in the midst of darkness. But as it is impossible that darkness should be able to enlighten itself; so it is also impossible for fallen man to raise himself from darkness to light. Hence the Psalmist says, "For thou wilt light my candle; the Lord my God will enlighten my darkness." Ps. 18:28. Let a man open his eyes ever so much, he will never be enlightened whilst the light of the sun is withdrawn from his sight. Thus the grace of God, that is, of Christ himself, is that clear and serene light, risen on all men "that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death." Luke 1:79. "He enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world" (John 1:9): that is, he manifests himself to all, and offers his grace to all. He is the light of the whole world; he shows the way of life to all men; and leaving us his own example for imitation, he goes before us like a good shepherd (John 10:4), and guides his flock into the path in which they are to walk. He sought us out as his lost sheep, and even now daily seeks and allures us. Luke 15:4. Nay, more; he still follows us closely, calls after us, and wooes us to his love, in as endearing a manner as a bridegroom does his bride. O that men did not love sin and darkness rather than light and grace!

9. Now, as a physician, addressing his patient, says: "Beware of this, lest you die; you hinder the workings of the medicine by an irregular life, so that you cannot be made whole;" so Jesus Christ, the true physician of souls, says: "My beloved, I beseech thee, incline thy mind to true repentance; utterly forsake all thy sins; shake off thy pride, thy covetousness, thy carnal propensities, thy wrath, and thirst of revenge, with other sins. If this change be not wrought in thee, thou must surely die; and the precious medicine of my blood and merit can profit thee nothing, whilst thy disorderly life hinders their healing effect."

10. It was for this cause that Christ gave it in charge to his apostles, before all things, to preach repentance (Luke 24:47); and he himself called sinners to it while he conversed with them upon earth; because an impenitent heart never can partake of his merits.

11. Whoever hears that either sin must be forsaken, or eternal condemnation be endured, must, of necessity, be brought to some serious consideration about the state of his soul. He is struck with a double conviction; the truth of the Word of God, and the power of his own conscience, leaving so strong an impression upon him, as to set him beyond all doubts about the truth of this matter. It is true, God hath freely promised remission of sin to all men; but it is on this condition, that they *repent*, and turn themselves unfeignedly to the Lord. Thus the prophet says, "If the wicked shall turn from his wickedness, he shall live thereby. None of his sins that he hath committed shall be mentioned

unto him" (Ezek. 33:14, 16): where we see that repentance and remission of sin are linked together.

12. Christ, the Son of God, in no other sense promises life eternal to those that believe in his name. The nature of faith must, however, be more fully inquired into. This faith is a very active principle in the soul. It daily strives against the old man; it tames the flesh, and subjects it to the Spirit; it converts the whole man; it subdues and vanquishes sin; it purifies the heart. He is a true believer who turns from the world, from sin and the devil, to God, and seeks rest and comfort wholly and entirely in the blood, death, and merit of Christ, without the works of himself, or of any other man whatsoever; the blood of Christ being a perfect ransom for all the debts which the soul has contracted. Whoever, therefore, imagines that his sins may be pardoned, although he desist not from them, is most miserably deluded. He deceives himself with a false faith, which he has assumed to himself, and the dreadful effects of which he must hereafter feel. He can never be saved without true repentance.

13. Consider the case of Zaccheus the publican, who, having a sound apprehension of the doctrine of faith and conversion, freely acknowledged *that* to be true faith by which a man is turned from sin to God, and in this order hopes to obtain a gracious pardon from Christ, and an interest in his merit, so as to rely upon it with a filial trust and an unshaken firmness of mind. In this manner did he understand the word of our Lord, "Repent ye, and believe the Gospel" (Mark 1:15): that is, Desist from sin, trust in my merits, and expect forgiveness of sin from me alone. Hence Zaccheus says to Christ, "Behold, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken anything by false accusation, I restore fourfold." Luke 19:8. In these words he does not commend his own works at all, but extols the grace of God, which had taught him the way of true repentance. As if he had said: "O Lord, I am so thoroughly grieved at the fraudulent practices which I have committed against my neighbor, that I will not only restore fourfold unto him, but will also bestow half of my goods on the poor. Wherefore, Lord, since I confess my sin, and fully resolve to leave it, I now embrace thy promises with faith, and beseech thee to receive me into thy grace and favor." And no sooner is this resolution taken, than the Physician declares, "This day is salvation come to this house. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

14. This is true repentance and conversion, carried on by a faith which is the work of God within us. God himself will begin, advance, and finish at last, the great work of our salvation, if we only yield to his Spirit, and do not resist him wilfully, as did the refractory Jews of old; to whom the apostle says: "It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles." Acts 13:46. It is, therefore, our duty to take the advice of the physician, after the manner of the sick, and to obey his precepts and prescriptions. As the physician first explains the nature of the disease, so the Lord lays open the spiritual disease of the heart, and then, as a faithful physician, warns us

against hurtful things, lest the healing virtue of the precious blood of Christ be obstructed, and at last rendered ineffectual.

15. No sooner does man, by the assistance of the Holy Ghost, withdraw from sin, than the grace of God begins to operate in him, and to endue him with new gifts. Without this, he is not sufficient to think any good thought of himself, much less to do any good work. Whenever such a person discovers any good motions arising in his mind, he attributes every good desire to divine grace, even as St. Paul says, "By the grace of God I am what I am." 1 Cor. 15 : 10. Whoever, therefore, complies with this order of salvation, to him the merit of Christ and his perfect obedience, are fully imputed, as if he himself had made a complete atonement for all his transgressions; but no wicked person, and no contemner of this dispensation, has a share in the imputation of the merit of Christ.

16. God, when he works in us and through us, crowns and commends those things as our own, of which he himself is the chief author. "Without me," saith Christ, "ye can do nothing" (John 15 : 5); that is, no good; for by nature we are ready enough to do evil without him. The doing of evil is our own property; as the doing of good is entirely the property of God. Therefore let no flesh glory in anything; all is of and through grace. Rom. 3 : 24; Eph. 2 : 8, 9.

17. Happy is the man that refrains from sin, and gives up his will to the Lord. Christ uses all his endeavors to gain our love and affections, and to wean us more and more from the profane love of the world. He applies the most endearing expressions, in his word, and in his addresses, to our hearts. He seeks and allures us; and even before we remember him, he bestows upon us tokens of his love and kindness; and this for no other end, than that we might at last forsake our beloved sin, and partake of the blessed effect of his blood and merits

CHAPTER XXXV.

ALL WISDOM, ARTS, AND SCIENCES, YEA, EVEN THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE WHOLE SCRIPTURE, ARE VAIN, WITHOUT A HOLY AND CHRISTIAN LIFE.

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.—MATTH. 7 : 21.

SINCE in Love are contained all the duties of a Christian, and since the whole life of Christ was nothing but the purest and most cordial love, therefore St. Paul, under the name of charity or love, has comprehended the whole life of a Christian. 1 Cor. 13 : 1.

2. It is the property of true love, to respect *God* alone in everything, and not *self*. It refers all to God; it does not love or honor self; it is not intent upon personal glory or interest; but it undertakes everything with a free and disinterested regard to God and man. He who is endued with Christian love, loves God and his neighbor

with pure affection, because God is the sovereign Good, to which we ought to adhere.

3. Whoever, therefore, is destitute of this love, must of necessity prove a hypocrite amidst all his pretences and boasts. In whatever he undertakes, he seeks himself, and not purely God, as he ought to do. For this reason, his love is false, be his boasts what they may. If such a man had all the Scriptures committed to memory, and could speak of them with the tongue of angels, yet would he still prove as sounding brass, without life and motion. For as no natural food can nourish the body, unless it be converted into the juices and the blood; so also the Word and the Sacraments are unavailing, if they be not converted into a man's life; and if a new, spiritual, and holy man, be not begotten thereby.

4. Hence St. Paul says, "Though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing." 1 Cor. 13 : 2. As if he had said, If I pursue mine own honor by those gifts and attainments, and seek anything besides the honor of God, and the good of my neighbor, then I am an abomination before the Lord, and not at all acceptable in his sight.

5. This is intimated by that saying of our Lord: "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name have cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matt. 7 : 22, 23): for you have not respected me alone in what you have done, but rather your own selves.

6. This is again attested by St. Paul: "Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." 2 Cor. 13 : 3. But can it be possible (some may say), to give all to the poor, and yet be destitute at the same time of love or charity? Yes; there may be a love which is not altogether single in what it performs, but biassed by impure designs, and by some temporal interest, or the applause of men, or any such selfish objects, whereby the best of actions are too often corrupted. Of this nature was the charity of the Pharisees of old, who offered abundance of sacrifices, and persuaded others to adorn the temple with magnificent gifts, and to bring sacrifices of great price. But whilst they suffered themselves to be led away by pride and ambition, which mingled with their very worship, they forgot to show mercy to the poor, and to practise that "undefiled religion," whereby the fatherless and the widows are to be supported and visited. James 1 : 27. For this preposterous charity, the Lord reproved them, saying: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation." Matt. 23 : 14. In this perverse religion they have many followers, even at this time. Such are those who bequeath large legacies to temples and monasteries, that priests and friars who enjoy them, may make long prayers for such as bestow them. This truly is a false and deceitful love; for those who perform these acts, do not so much regard the honor of God as their own.

7. He that is *justified*, shall live by his *faith* (Habak. 2 : 4); and whosoever is thus justified, lives in true re-

pentance, and by daily mortification of his flesh, becomes himself a *sacrifice* unto the Lord. Rom. 12 : 1. He spends his time in continual acts of love and charity; flowing from a disinterested principle, free from self-honor and self-love, and entirely directed to advancing the glory of God. Therefore, O man, if thou even yieldest thy body to be burnt, and yet art void at the same time of this pure and sincere love, thou doest nothing in all such performances. And what do they profit themselves, who torture their bodies? They generally are puffed up with a conceit of their singular sanctity, and, thus setting forth their own pompous religion and will-worship, they do not regard God in what they do, so much as catch at the applause of men. Isa. 58 : 3; Zech. 7 : 5, 6. Nay, some are blinded to such a degree by the spirit of delusion and error, as to suffer themselves to be burnt in defence of conceits such as these. They expect thereby to be enrolled in the list of such martyrs as were slain for the sake of Christ and the Gospel; when in truth they seek not Christ, but themselves, and rise not to defend *his* honor, but their own erroneous opinions. This is called by St. Paul, a strong *delusion*, and a *working of Satan*. 2 Thess. 2 : 9, 11. It is not the punishment, but the cause, which makes a martyr.

8. Such martyrs as these the devil has had even amongst the heathens themselves; many of whom were so far blinded in their understandings, as contentedly to die for the defence of their idols, and false, heathenish religion. And is not the same done at this day amongst those who call themselves Christians? Even as the heathens, to gain an immortal name, persuaded themselves that they did well in what they endured, so self-love and vainglory have so far besotted some monks, and other persons even in our age, as that they have murdered kings and princes, to support the better their church, or the *Catholic cause*, as they call it, which they supposed to be in danger. If such men are made to suffer again, it is manifest that they do not suffer for the sake of Christ, nor are they to be accounted *his* martyrs. They are martyrs to the pope of Rome, to their own conceit, and to a thirst after vainglory, with which they are carried away. Thus much concerning false love, to which man is seduced by a false and deceitful light.

9. It remains, therefore, that without a sincere love to God and our neighbor, and a holy and Christian life attending it, all arts and sciences, gifts and attainments, profit nothing. Wisdom, how great soever it may be, yea, though it be as great, or greater than that of Solomon, is nothing; and the knowledge of the whole Scripture, if it be without love, must necessarily degenerate into a poor, empty speculation. All works whatsoever, and martyrdom itself (if so it be called), are to no purpose without this essential character of love. For to know the will of God and his word, and not to live up to them as a rule, only increases our condemnation, as the Lord plainly affirms: "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin; but now they have no cloak for their sin." John 15 : 22.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

HE WHO DOES NOT LIVE IN CHRIST, BUT GIVES HIS HEART TO THE WORLD, HAS ONLY THE OUTWARD LETTER OF THE SCRIPTURES, BUT HE DOES NOT EXPERIENCE THEIR POWER, OR EAT OF THE HIDDEN MANNA.

To him that overcometh, will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.—Rev. 2 : 17.

BY this Scripture we are taught, that no man can taste the inward sweetness of heavenly joy and comfort hidden in the Word, who does not first vanquish his own flesh and the world, with all the pomps and lusts thereof, and the devil himself. But those that crucify their flesh daily, with all its desires and lusts, by serious contrition and repentance, who die daily to themselves and to the world, and to whom this life is a cross and affliction; these are divinely fed with the heavenly manna, and drink the wine of the joy of paradise. Those, on the other hand, that love the pleasures of this world rather than those of heaven, render themselves altogether unfit to taste the hidden manna, preserved for him alone that overcometh. The reason is, because *like things* (according to the proverb) rejoice *in their like;* and things of a contrary nature do not unite one with another. Since, therefore, the word of God is spiritual, it is no wonder that worldly minds take no pleasure in it. For as the body receives no strength from the food which the stomach does not digest; so the soul receives no strength from the divine word, unless it be entirely converted into itself, that is, into its own life and nature.

2. Yea, as a man that is sick of a fever acquires a distempered appetite, and deems the coarsest trash more pleasant than wholesome food; so those that are sick of a spiritual fever, that is, of the love of the world, of pride and covetousness, loathe the good word of God as bitter and insipid food. Those, on the other hand, that have the Spirit of God, find in it a hidden manna, and a secret sweetness, which transcends all other delights; but then it is not to be tasted by such as are carried away with the pleasures of a profane world.

3. Many hear the glad tidings of the Gospel repeatedly, and yet are but little affected with what they hear. They do not feel any fervency of spirit, any sense of spiritual joy. The cause is plain; they are not led by the good Spirit of God, but by the corrupt spirit of the world; nor have they heavenly, but earthly minds, which cannot receive the things of God. Whoever, therefore, wishes to obtain a sound understanding in spiritual matters, to feel the power of the word of God, and to eat of the hidden manna, ought by all means to conform his life to the word which he reads, and to the life of Christ which is set before him. It is then that the Lord feeds the humble with grace (1 Pet. 5 : 5), satisfies the meek with his love, and supports the patient with his comfort; rendering his yoke pleasant, and his burden light

unto them. For the sweetness of this heavenly manna cannot be tasted except under the yoke of Christ, according to the promise of the Lord: "He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he hath sent empty away." Luke 1:53.

4. "The words that I speak unto you," saith the Lord, "they are spirit and they are life." John 6:63. Whence it follows, that a carnal and voluptuous man, who has no spiritual understanding or taste, cannot possibly perceive or relish the words of Christ. These must be apprehended in spirit, and in an inward tranquillity of mind, attended with great humility and fervent desires after God. In this order, the Word of God must be received and digested, if ever it is to afford a vital nourishment to the soul; which, if it be neglected, then truly the Word is no more than an empty sound, and an external letter. As a man that hears the sound of a harp, and understands not its melody, receives no pleasure from it; so no man can perceive the virtue hidden in the Word, unless he endeavor to express it in his life, and thoroughly to conform himself to it in his spirit.

5. For this reason, the Lord says: "I will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it."

6. This is the testimony of the hidden Spirit, who witnesses to the divine Word: and in like manner, the Spirit of the Word gives testimony to our spirit (Rom. 8:16), whence both unite, and so become one spirit. 1 Cor. 6:17. This is that new name, which no man knoweth but he that hath it. As no man perceives the sweetness of honey, but he that tastes it; so the name of this divine testimony, written in the hearts of good souls, no man knoweth but he that possesses it. He only understands the nature of heavenly comfort, and of divine visitations, who really tastes them. This name and testimony are called *new*, because they are the blessed effect of the *new birth*, and come *from above*.

7. Blessed is the man to whom God thus gives himself to be tasted! Thus were the prophets of old fed with this heavenly bread, and sustained by the eternal Word proceeding from God, and communicating itself unto them. This made their tongues so free and so ready in the delivery of the divine oracles. And from this inward sense, with which they were so powerfully affected, the Holy Scripture has been derived, and handed down to us for our edification.

8. Even at this day, God does not cease still to speak unto all men, and inwardly to feed them with his Word: but alas! most men have shut their ears against his voice, and will rather hear the world than God, and follow their own lusts, than the motions of the good Spirit of God. They cannot eat of the hidden manna, because they greedily adhere to their carnal propensities, and contemn the tree of life, with the fruit thereof.

9. But surely such men are awfully blinded, since they will not understand that God can afford infinitely greater pleasures than this world is capable of imparting. He that has once tasted the goodness of God, will esteem the whole world, together with its most exquisite pleasures, to be nothing but gall and bitterness. Our first parents were beguiled by the world; and by eating of the forbidden tree, they brought no less an evil upon themselves than death itself: and yet we are so much besotted with the pleas-

ures of this world, as to follow freely their steps, and to obey the forbidden lusts of the flesh, which cause our death. Rom. 8 : 13.

10. Christ says: "If any shall eat of me," the true tree, and the true bread of life, "he shall live for ever." John 6 : 51. And what is it to *eat of him*, but to believe in him, to rejoice in him, to delight in him, and to rest and to take pleasure in nothing but him alone? The world bestows poor and inconsiderable wages, and yet it is served with great labor and earnestness; whereas God grants an eternal and never-fading reward; and yet with what sluggishness, coldness, and backwardness is his service performed! How few there are, who adhere to God with as much care and faith, devotion and obedience, as profane worldlings do to mammon, and the world! We see them often take long and tedious journeys for a little money; but for the sake of heaven, it grieves them to move even a foot.

11. In all classes men seek and love the world more than they regard God. Many a scholar studies day and night to attain preferment and honor, who will hardly take time to say the *Lord's Prayer* for the good of his soul. The men who avoid no labor to get the bread that perishes, will undergo none to procure that which is incorruptible. There are many who fear no difficulty, flee from no danger, and, in an earthly warfare, stare even death in the face; influenced by no other motive than to gain a little fleeting fame, or at best, to be ranked among nobles and heroes: whereas there is hardly one to be found that will enter into a combat with the corrupt propensities of his flesh, although this is the way to obtain a kingdom in heaven. We see the victors of many nations, and the subduers of vast kingdoms, who little care to overcome themselves. There are large numbers who do not regard the loss of their immortal souls, if they can but gain the perishing goods of this world. All these, certainly, have not tasted the hidden manna of the divine Word; for they do not overcome the world, but are themselves overcome by it. Whosoever will taste the sweetness of this heavenly manna, must, for the sake of the love of God, despise the world, and overcome it. When he complies with these terms, he is refreshed again with that comfort of the Holy Ghost, which no man knows save he that receives it.

12. This, therefore, must be done. The tree of life must first be planted in us, before we can eat of its fruit: and the heart that wishes to be quickened with heavenly comforts, ought first to be truly converted from the world to God. But we, being intoxicated with worldly pleasures, do not see that the joys of heaven are far more excellent than all that this world affords. That which God gives, is infinitely more true and more substantial than all which the creature can bestow. And that teaching which comes from above, through the inspiration of the divine Spirit, is far more noble and solid than that which is conveyed to us by man's understanding, and imprinted on the mind with much toil and labor. The flowers and fruits which are the productions of nature are nobler and better than those which are fashioned of the finest gold by the hand of art; even so, one drop of divine consolation is more satisfactory, and incomparably better, than a whole ocean of worldly lust and pleasure.

13. Whenever, therefore, thou desirest to taste any heavenly comfort, withdraw thy heart from the joys of

this world. As if the Lord were to say, "If any will understand me, let him seriously attend to what I say; if any will see me, it surely behooves him to fix his eye upon me alone." Who can doubt but that our heart and senses, and all the faculties of our souls ought to be converted to God, and fixed on him alone, if ever we desire to see, hear, and understand God; nay, to taste him and his goodness? For thus he expresses himself in the Prophet: "When ye shall search for me with your whole heart, ye shall find me." Jer. 29 : 13.

14. Many at this day are held in great admiration on a very light account. Oh! a learned man! (they say), a rich man! a great man! a wise man! But scarcely any regard how meek, how humble, how patient, or how devout any man is. Of this perverse judgment, there is no other cause, than that the people of this world only admire the *exterior* of a man, and pass by what is *within* the mind, which alone is worthy to be esteemed and valued. Let him that praises a man because he is a great traveller, and has seen many cities and countries, consider whether it be not far better to have seen God. Let him that admires another, because he has served several monarchs, and attended on emperors, kings, and princes, tell us whether it be not far more excellent to be the servant of God, to wait on the King of Heaven, to hear Him speak in the heart, and to serve Him faithfully? Many who enjoy nothing but the things of this world, will say, "We have abundance of learned men and great scholars in this age; arts and sciences are greatly advanced among us." But such men as these, do not know the art of arts, the science of sciences, which is divine Love; a benefit preferable to all other knowledge and learning, but which seems to be almost wholly extinct in this degenerate age, together with faith itself, that produces it. The number of those that are in truth divinely "taught of God," is apparently but small (Isa. 54 : 13); and so of those that care to be instructed in the humble and meek life of Christ. Matt. 11 : 29. Yea, to speak plainly, there are among the most learned at this day, some who are, perhaps, the most alienated from the life of God, and know but little of that truth which is in Jesus. They are those who confine knowledge to words and terms artfully contrived; when indeed solid erudition and learning consist not in *words*, but in *things*, and in a real and eternal wisdom. Upon the whole, whoever calls this world a wicked world, is not mistaken in his judgment.

15. Others will praise a man, because he keeps a rich and plentiful table, and fares sumptuously every day; but they do not consider that the very crumbs dropping from God's table, are transcendently better than the choicest dishes of the wealthy and greedy; and that the hidden manna, and the incorruptible bread descending from heaven, and prepared by the Lord himself, afford the most savory and most delicious food for nourishing the soul. Ps. 23 : 5.

16. Whoever enjoys God and his Word, is disgusted at nothing, and nothing can displease him; for he enjoys God in all. But what can delight him, who does not taste the sweetness of God, and the goodness of his Word? GOD alone is the joy of the soul. He infinitely surpasses all earthly joy and transient mirth. He is the eternal Light, which incomparably exceeds all created lights. May he be pleased to

influence our hearts with his hidden pleasure! May he purify our spirits, and all the faculties of our souls! May he enlighten and quicken, correct and revive all that is within us! And, O! when shall that glorious hour appear, in which the Lord will satiate us with his presence, and replenish us with all that he himself is! Isa. 55 : 12.

17. But as we are not yet prepared for so transcendent a joy, so we cannot partake of it, while we are confined to this state of imperfection. Let us, therefore, be content with the crumbs of comfort which fall from the Lord's table, and patiently wait for that time, wherein we shall be refreshed with his joy for evermore!

18. Hear the words of our blessed Saviour: "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." Rev. 3 : 20. Is it not, then, a foolish thing to slight so great a favor, and to treat contemptuously the King of kings, who, like a heavenly guest, comes to see thee? Is it not disgraceful to let a friend stand knocking without, and refuse to admit a man to thy presence, who has nothing at heart but thy welfare? How unaccountable then must it be to debar the great God from thy heart, who stands in no need of thy presents; but, after the manner of princes, brings his own royal dainties with him when he approaches the house of a poor subject! He will feed thee with heavenly bread, and with that hidden manna which is preserved for those that overcome.

19. When the Lord says, "Hear my voice, and open the door," he compares, as it were, the heart of a man to a house full of noise and clamor, where music, though ever so sweet and melodious, cannot be heard. So the voice of the divine Visitor cannot enter a profane heart, whilst it is hurried about with the cares and desires of this world. Such a heart closes the door against this Visitor, and consequently cannot taste the sweetness of the celestial manna. But when this noise and tumult cease, it is then that these secret whispers are best perceived in men. And O! that thou, with Samuel, couldest answer: "Speak Lord, for thy servant heareth." 1 Sam. 3 : 10.

20. The truth of this internal, spiritual, and heavenly supper is also attested elsewhere. The apostle speaks of some, that "have been once enlightened, and tasted of the heavenly gift, and have been made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come." Heb. 6 : 4. By this we are taught, that in whomsoever the Holy Ghost freely resides, there the virtues and powers of the world to come are also tasted. It is then that the soul feeds on that manna, which is hid in the gracious Word proceeding out of the mouth of God, and by which all the saints live.

21. The efficacy of this living Word was also tasted by the royal prophet, through the Holy Ghost, when he burst forth into these words: "In thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." Ps. 16 : 11. From this lively sense, he also invited others to an enjoyment of the same sweetness, saying, "O taste and see that the Lord is good. There is no want to them that fear him." Ps. 34 : 8, 9. Of the plenty and dignity of this heavenly banquet, he hath thus expressed himself: "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my

cup runneth over." Ps. 23 : 5. "Thy loving kindness is better than life." Ps. 63 : 3. "They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures." Ps. 36 : 8. And lastly, "Let all those that seek thee, rejoice and be glad in thee; and let such as love thy salvation, say continually, Let God be magnified. But I am poor and needy; make haste unto me, O God: thou art my help and my deliverer; O Lord, make no tarrying." Ps. 70 : 4, 5.

22. From all these, and many other places besides, it may abundantly be known who those are that are inwardly fed with the good Word of God, and with the hidden manna of the world to come; even those that are poor in spirit, who entirely rely on divine comfort. These only are worthy to taste of this heavenly manna, and of the divine gift, of which David speaks at large: "How amiable," says he, "are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God." Ps. 84:1, 2. By this Scripture we may understand, that the least pleasure of the world to come, infinitely exceeds all the joys of this world; and that one day passed there, is far more excellent than a thousand years here. Whoever has tasted these exquisite pleasures, will discard the things of this life, as empty and insipid. The whole world becomes a burden, a trouble and vexation of spirit, to such a person. He is like one that is accustomed to delicious fare, and consequently cannot partake of what is coarse.

23. This is so sacred a hunger and thirst, that none but God alone can satisfy it, and he only, by his love. This is that spiritual fulness with which the saints are satiated, according to the words: "Eat, O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved." Song of Sol. 5 : 1. These spiritual enjoyments the Lord bestows on his friends, in order to unite them the more closely to himself, and to make them the sooner forget the perishing things of this world. A few crumbs of this bread, a few drops pressed from this heavenly vine, ought to excite our desires after that plentiful and abounding fountain, which shall flow for us hereafter.

24. In order that the Lord might excite in us so sacred a thirst, and that he might make us long the more earnestly after such heavenly objects as these, it was expedient that he should first himself thirst upon the cross for our sakes. John 19 : 28. As he himself satisfies and quenches our hunger and thirst, so ought we again to satiate his thirst and ardent desire of loving. He more fervently thirsts after us, than we do after him; according to that which he hath himself declared: "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work" (John 4 : 34): and the will of God was, to save men from everlasting destruction. If we but thirsted after him as he thirsts after us, we should then drink so plentifully of his Spirit, that even "rivers of living water would flow from our bodies" (John 7 : 38): that is, nothing should be seen in us, but what is spiritual, lovely, and consolatory. Nay, he would make us overflow, as it were, with a torrent of divine goodness and consolation, so that soul and body, and all that is within us, should triumphantly rejoice in the living God. For nothing is of so great and so divine an amplitude as a man's soul, after it has gained true

freedom and liberty. Such a soul comprehends God, heaven, and earth. And again, nothing is less than a man's soul in its nothingness and humiliation, when it humbles itself under God and all his creatures.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

HE WHO DOES NOT FOLLOW CHRIST IN FAITH, HOLINESS, AND CONTINUED REPENTANCE, CANNOT BE DELIVERED FROM THE BLINDNESS OF HIS HEART, BUT MUST ABIDE IN ETERNAL DARKNESS; AND HE CANNOT HAVE A TRUE KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST, OR FELLOWSHIP WITH HIM.

God is light, and in him is no darkness at all: if we say we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another.— 1 John 1: 5–7.

THAT we may the better understand the nature of light and darkness, it is necessary first to give heed to the description of the light, as it is originally.

2. "God is light," saith St. John. But what is God? God is a spiritual, eternal, and infinite Being; God is almighty, merciful, gracious, righteous, holy, true, and the only wise God. God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, is unspeakable love and faithfulness; He is one in three Persons; He is the Sovereign Good, and good essentially. And this is the true and everlasting light. Whence every one that departs from God, from his love, his mercy, his righteousness, and his truth, departs also from light itself, and must consequently fall into darkness; for without God there is nothing but everlasting darkness. O how dark, therefore, is that soul in which God doth not dwell! Now if God be light, then the devil must certainly be darkness; and if God be love, then the devil must be nothing but hatred and wrath, enmity and envy, malice and uncharitableness, sin and wickedness. Whoever, therefore, turns himself to sin, turns himself to darkness and to the devil. Neither can he be delivered, till he turn back again, from darkness to light, from sin to righteousness, from vice to virtue, from the devil to God. Acts 26: 18. And this is the work of a true and living faith which purifies the heart. Acts 15: 9. For he who believes in Christ, daily repents and turns from sin and the devil to Christ Jesus. For even as Adam by sin turned himself from God to the devil, so we ought to withdraw again, by true repentance and faith, from the devil to God.

3. Hence it follows that man, without being converted from sin to God, can never be truly enlightened. "For what communion hath light with darkness?" 2 Cor. 6: 14. Impiety and impenitence are wholly darkness, and, consequently, can have no fellowship with the light of the knowledge of Christ. So that it is absolutely impossible that those should be enlightened by the Spirit, and the light of eternal truth, who live in darkness and impenitence. To this purpose,

St. Paul says concerning the Jews: "When they shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away" (2 Cor. 3 : 16); that is, their darkness, blindness, and ignorance shall be removed, and Christ shall give them light.

4. The greatest blindness, or thickest darkness that covers the minds of men, is the sin of unbelief, with the fruits resulting from it; such as pride, avarice, wrath, and the whole train of sensual lusts and pleasures. Wherever these take possession of a man, it is impossible that he should know Christ, the true Light of the world; much less can he savingly believe in him, trust in him, and obtain by him everlasting life.

5. For how should that man know the humility of the heart of Christ, whose own heart abounds with pride and high-mindedness? How should he be acquainted with the meekness of the heart of Christ, who is full of bitter wrath and envy? How should he understand his marvellous patience, who delights in revenge, and is hurried about with a multitude of unruly passions? But he who does not understand the humility, meekness, and patience of Christ, does not know Christ himself, nor believe in his holy name. For truly, if ever thou desirest to attain a sound knowledge of Christ, thou must obtain, by faith, the same heart which is in Christ; thou must experimentally perceive in thy heart, his meekness, his patience, and his humility. It is then that thy knowledge becomes solid and substantial. As a fruit is known by the taste, so Christ, the tree of life, is known by tasting. Whenever thou tastest by faith the humility of Christ, his meekness and his patience, thou then eatest of his fruit, and shalt find rest for thy soul. Thou enjoyest in Christ the favor and consolation of God. This is the only way to true rest and tranquillity of mind. For the grace and comfort of God cannot enter into a heart that is void of faith, and destitute of the meekness and humility of Christ. It is to the *humble* that God gives grace. 1 Pet. 5 : 5.

6. But how is it possible that Christ should profit a man who does not desire to have the least fellowship with him? For, in truth, all those that live in the darkness of sin, have no fellowship with Christ, be their pretences what they will. For thus says St. John: "If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another." 1 John 1 : 6, 7. And in the following chapter he explains it more fully: "The darkness is past, and the true light now shineth. He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother, abideth in the light, and there is no occasion of stumbling in him. But he that hateth his brother, is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes." 1 John 2 : 8–11.

7. As long, then, as a man continues in that dark and terrible cloud of sin, it is impossible that he should be enlightened by Christ, the true Light of the world, and be thereby brought to a saving knowledge of God. Whoever will attain to a true knowledge of God and Christ, must firmly believe that God is nothing but grace and love. Now, no man can know what love is, but he that has, and practises it, the knowledge of a thing being the result of a man's experi-

ence, of his feelings, and of the works of truth which he performs. Whoever, therefore, does not exercise love (whatever words he may use about it), continues an utter stranger to the nature of love; and what he is pleased to call love, is nothing but show and pretence. And as Christ himself is nothing but love and humility, meekness and patience, and every true virtue, so a man that is not frequent in the performance of these and the like virtues, is altogether ignorant of Christ and of the truth. He is but a superficial pretender to, and a vain usurper of, His holy name, let his boasts be what they may. The Word of God is nothing but spirit. Whoever, therefore, does not live and walk in the Spirit, in no wise understands what the Word of God is, though he may dispute and argue copiously about it. How shall a man tell us what love is, who never performed any act of love? How shall a man give an account of the nature of light, who, having been constantly confined to a dark dungeon, has never seen the light himself? Now, the light in man is faith and charity, according to the saying of Christ: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Matt. 5 : 16.

8. In a word, the holy life of Christ is nothing but love and charity. No sooner do we, by faith, learn from him true love and humility, meekness and patience, as he himself has engaged us to do, than we are transformed into his image, and enlightened with that true and eternal light, which he himself is; according to that exhortation of St. Paul: "Awake thou that sleepest (namely, in sins and the lust of the flesh), and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." Eph. 5 : 14.

9. From all this it follows, that in the case of as many as do not awake from their spiritual lethargy, that is, from the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, the pride of life, and other pleasures that attend them, their souls cannot be enlightened by Christ, since they love darkness rather than light, and thereby unfit themselves for a reception of the divine light.

10. It also hence appears that those, on the other hand, who truly embrace the life of Christ, and follow him in faith, are by him graciously enlightened, according to his promise: "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me (in faith and love, hope and patience, meekness and humility, fear of God, and in prayer, etc.) shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." John 8 : 12. Therefore, the true followers of Christ, and these only, freely enjoy the light of life, and are alone endued with true illumination and sound knowledge of Christ. And it is on account of this Christian faith and life, that true believers are called by the Apostle, *a light in the Lord.* "Ye were," saith he, "sometime darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord" (Eph. 5 : 8): here he means the principle of faith, and those Christian virtues that attend it. And again, "Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness,"—"putting on the breast-plate of faith and love, and for a helmet, the hope of salvation." 1 Thess. 5 : 5, 8. Christ denies that the world (that is, carnal and unregenerate minds), can ever "receive the Spirit of Truth." John 14 : 17.

11. That there might be a perfect

and absolute example given to men, and a complete idea of virtue and goodness, the Son of God became also Man, and by his unspotted and holy life was made the public Light of the world, that so all men might follow him, believe in him, and receive light from him. Since, however, false Christians own with their lips that Christ is the safe and great exemplar of virtue, and yet do not follow him in their life and actions, it is manifest, that the heathens who esteemed virtue, put the Christians to shame. The most eminent of them, such as Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Seneca, have highly recommended the study of virtue, and freely confessed, that "if virtue could be seen with bodily eyes, it would appear fairer, and with a more glorious lustre than even the morning star." But, truly, none have had a fuller view of the beauty of virtue, than those who by faith have seen JESUS CHRIST, that unerring pattern of righteousness. These are those that have "handled the Word of life" (1 John 1 : 1), as St. John tells us. And, surely, if heathens have been so much absorbed by the love of virtue, how much more should a Christian love the transcendent beauty of Jesus Christ, who is virtue itself, and composed of nothing but pure love, and unspotted meekness; nay, who is GOD himself?

12. It was not without cause, therefore, that St. Paul preferred the love of Christ to all other knowledge or science: and with him we ought to pray that we may experimentally "know this love of Christ which passeth knowledge" (Eph. 3 : 19), that so we may thereby be "filled with all the fulness of God." Now there is no man that has the love of Christ in him, but he must necessarily also love the humility and meekness of Christ, and from sincere love to him readily embrace them. By this means he is still more and more enlightened, and day by day transformed into the image of Christ, "as from glory to glory." 2 Cor. 3 : 18. And the reason of this is evident; for God delights to give grace to the humble (1 Peter 5 : 5), as the Scripture tells us: agreeably to what St. Bernard says, "The rivers of grace flow downwards, not upwards." They visit and refresh the valley, but will not rest upon mountains, or upon anything that is high and lifted up. How should then the grace of the light and knowledge of God come to a man that walks not in the humble and holy light of Christ, but in the way of Lucifer? For if there be any faith in us, and if this be attended with suitable fruits and practice, it will not leave us "barren and unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." 2 Peter 1 : 8. In an humble soul Christ lives, and then also his Spirit rests upon it (the spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord), as truly as it rested upon Christ himself. For in whomsoever the light and the life of Christ dwell, in him is also Christ himself, who is the very light and life of a Christian. And this also is the reason that the gifts and graces of the divine Spirit rest upon a true Christian, as well as upon Christ himself, according to the prophecy of Isaiah. Ch. 11 : 1–3.

13. Hence St. Peter, speaking to the Jews, exhorts them to repent (or to be renewed in their minds): "and ye shall," says he, "receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Acts 2 : 38. Whence it plainly appears, that those who are in a state of faith and repentance, are the only men duly prepared for re-

ceiving the divine Spirit, the true enlightener of hearts.

14. Whoever, therefore, desires to be delivered from the blindness of his heart, and from eternal darkness, yea, from the devil himself, let him faithfully follow Christ in true faith, in unfeigned conversion, and in a thorough newness of life. The nearer we are to Christ, the nearer we are to the eternal light; the more closely we adhere to unbelief, the more we adhere to darkness and to the devil himself. For even as Christ, faith, and all the virtues, are nearly allied and belong together, so in like manner, are the devil, unbelief, and all the vices, and works of darkness, so nearly combined, as to render it impossible to conceive of one without the other.

15. Consider the apostles of the Lord. They followed their Master in faith, in contempt of the world, denying themselves, in renouncing their possessions, and in living together in unity of the Spirit. By this means they were enlightened from above, and filled with the Holy Ghost. Acts 2: 1, etc. With these terms the rich young man in the Gospel being unwilling to comply, he continued shut up in the darkness of the world, and was not enlightened unto eternal life. Luke 18: 23. For "if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." 1 John 2: 15. And "he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth: because that darkness hath blinded his eyes." 1 John 2: 11.

16. All the sermons of Tauler refer to this subject. He makes it appear, that without the sincere exercise of faith, without a serious course of mortification, without self-denial, without a narrow search into one's own heart, and without the inward, calm sabbath of the soul, no man can obtain or enjoy the divine light.

17. In short, in proportion as the works of darkness are destroyed in a man by the Spirit of God, in that proportion is he illuminated; and again, in the same degree as the corrupt nature, the flesh, and the world, pride, and the lust of the eyes, domineer in a man, in that degree darkness is left in him, and the less of grace, of light, of the Spirit of God and of Christ, is he possessed of. Therefore it remains, that without unfeigned repentance, and a *daily* repentance, no man can be truly enlightened from above.

18. Whoever yields too much to one sin, undoubtedly opens a door to many others. Sin never comes alone, but, like a noxious weed, spreads itself on every side, and gains more ground every day. And as the darkness becomes greater accordingly as the sun retires, so as the holy life of Christ departs from us, the darkness and sin increase, till at length the man is swallowed up in eternal darkness. On the contrary, if a man devote himself to the practice of one virtue, he gains thereby an opportunity of practising all the rest in time, and cannot but daily proceed from one to another. This admirable connection is represented by St. Peter as a chain, in which all the rings are linked together, and none is suffered to separate from another. "Add," he says, "to your faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity;" superadding one virtue continually to another, and crowning all at last with this promise: "If these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither

be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." 2 Peter 1 : 5–8. To sum up all in a few words: Whoever is not earnestly bent on the exercise of such heavenly virtues as these, certainly knows not Christ, and is void of all saving knowledge: whereas, if a man by faith grow in virtue, he also grows in Christ himself. On the contrary, the wrathful, the covetous, the proud, the impatient, do not grow in Christ, but in the devil.

19. It is the apostle's command, that we should grow up "unto a perfect man." Eph. 4 : 13. As a child gradually grows up to the stature of a perfect man, so a Christian ought daily to grow in the practice of faith and virtue, till he become a perfect man in Christ. But "he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins." 2 Pet. 1 : 9. As if the apostle had said: Christ by his death has indeed taken away our sins, and blotted them out; not that we should continue in the service of sin, but that, dying to sin, and living to Christ, we should show forth the fructifying power of the death of Christ. Without this order practically applied to the mind, it is manifest, that the purging away of our old sins, and the atonement made for them, can profit us nothing. Our sin is never forgiven until we entirely quit it, repent of it, and embrace Christ with an unfeigned belief. If we preserve but one sin alive, the mortifying of all the rest, if that were possible, would avail nothing; but we should be condemned to eternal death, without any hope of expiation or forgiveness. Thus, a man may be damned for the sin of wrath alone; whereas, if he had seriously corrected and quitted it, he would have obtained pardon not only for that, but even for other sins of which he stood guilty. But neglecting to do this, he is one of those that are "blind," and "he forgets that he was purged from his old sins!" 2 Pet. 1 : 9.

20. By this we are given to understand the necessity of repentance, and a thorough change of life: for although Christ died for our sins, and abolished them with the price of his blood, yet can we never partake of that merit, unless we *repent*. Without repentance this precious blood profits nothing. And though every man has a promise of pardon for his sin through the merit of Christ, yet that promise belongs not to the unbeliever, nor to the impenitent, but to those only who truly repent and reform their lives. Those sins shall not be remitted, which a man will not leave; but those only which he is willing to quit, and for which he heartily grieves. And here the word of the Lord is verified, "The poor have the Gospel preached to them;" that is, remission of sin, and life everlasting consequent upon it. Matt. 11 : 5. Let us suppose a man, who, for many years, has been the servant of covetousness, after the example of Zaccheus; or of lust, as Mary Magdalene; or of wrath and revenge, as Esau. Let us also suppose that this man, as soon as he heard that either these sins were to be entirely left, or that the death and blood of Christ would else profit him nothing, becomes a true suppliant to God, and cries out to him: "Oh God! how am I grieved for this! O Lord, be merciful, be merciful!" and then forms a new resolution, desists from his sin, craves pardon and grace, and believes in Christ. Then all his former offences are, of grace, freely remitted

to him. No merit of his own is regarded, but solely the death and the blood of Christ shed for him. This is the only way in which a returning sinner is to obtain mercy. Whereas, he that does not fully resolve to abandon his former sins, his covetousness, wrath, usury, pride, lust, etc., will hope forever in vain for a remission of sin, being condemned to everlasting confusion and anguish. He shall be obliged to satisfy for himself the justice of God, and yet will never be able to perform it. On earth he was destitute of that faith which purifies the heart (Acts 15 : 9); and so his sin and lust, which have not been mortified here, shall forever torment him there. It is for this reason, that St. Paul so earnestly inculcates, "that they which do such things, shall not inherit the kingdom of God." Gal. 5 : 21. And therefore either the loss of this heavenly kingdom must certainly follow, or the narrow way of *self-denial* must be heartily chosen.

21. Wherever this unfeigned conversion to, and faith in, God, are wrought in the soul, there pardon and divine grace are freely bestowed. And where these are, there is Christ also; without whom no grace can be obtained. Where Christ is, there are likewise his precious merit, and the full ransom which he has paid for our sins, and which is appropriated to the penitent soul. Again, where these are, there is righteousness; and with righteousness, is peace; and with peace, sweet serenity of conscience. It is then, that righteousness and peace kiss each other in the soul. Ps. 85 : 10. This clearness of conscience is attended with the Spirit of God himself; who being a Spirit of joy, will surely pour forth the "oil of gladness" (Heb. 1 : 9), and quicken the soul with a foretaste of life eternal itself, which shall be joy and glory without end.

22. This is that light of eternal life, that eternally triumphant joy, with which those only are crowned that live in Christ, and exercise daily repentance. This is the beginning of a spiritual life, as the death of Christ is the basis and foundation on which it is raised. On the contrary, where there is no repentance, there is no pardon of sin; where there is no inward remorse or spiritual sorrow, there grace cannot have a place. Where these are wanting, there Christ himself is wanting, together with the whole extent of his merits and satisfaction, be the pretences of the *false* Christian ever so fair and specious. Where this satisfaction is not thoroughly applied to the soul, there is no righteousness, and consequently no peace, no good conscience, no comfort. Where there is no comfort of heart, there is no Holy Ghost, no joy, no calmness of mind, and no life eternal; but death, hell, condemnation, and everlasting darkness.

23. Behold, O man! how true it is, that none of those who refuse to follow Christ in their lives, by an unfeigned repentance, can ever get rid of the blindness of their hearts, and of everlasting darkness.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

SHOWING THAT AN UNCHRISTIAN LIFE LEADS TO FALSE DOCTRINE, HARDNESS OF HEART, AND BLINDNESS; ALSO, TREATING OF THE ETERNAL ELECTION OF GRACE.

Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.—JOHN 12: 35.

SINCE Christ, and faith in him are denied, and almost wholly extirpated by an ungodly life, what shall his doctrine profit us? For his doctrine, with the Word and Sacraments, is delivered to us for no other end, than that it be inwardly digested, and converted, as it were, into our very life and spirit. As from a good seed springs up good fruit, so from the Word and Sacraments should spring up within us the noble life of regeneration, or the new birth; the new, holy, and spiritual man; or, to speak all in one word, a true and real Christian. For he that is a Christian, must needs be born again of the Spirit, the Word, and the Sacraments, and believe and live in Christ, as in the primary principle of the life of grace. As certainly as a child is begotten by his father, so truly must the Christian be begotten of God and of Christ, through faith. James 1: 18; 1 Peter 1: 23; John 3: 3, 5; Titus 3: 5.

2. When, therefore, we do not resolve to strive against the depraved bent of our flesh, and to digest the doctrine of Christ into our life and nature; nay, when we contradict the *Christian* doctrine by an *anti-Christian* life, by irreligion and profaneness; is it not plain that we are not begotten of God, nor born of Christ? What will Christ's *doctrine* profit us, when we are sure that our *life* does not correspond with it at all? Will our vain boasts of the light of the Gospel do any good, when we evidently walk in darkness? It is on this account that the light deservedly retires from us, and the world begins to be overspread with darkness and false doctrines, with errors and with seducing spirits. And that we might beware of these, our blessed Saviour hath left us this warning: "While ye have the light, walk in the light, lest darkness come upon you" (John 12: 35); that is, lest ye be led away into all kinds of errors and delusions, into blindness and hardness of heart, into darkness and prejudices, which indispose the mind for the very reception of the light of the Gospel. This was the case with Pharaoh, the Jews, and also of Julian the Apostate; who, being in the end convicted by the reproaches of his own conscience, exclaimed openly, and to his own confusion, that Christ both lived and reigned, and was both Lord and God; saying, "Thou hast overcome, O Galilean; thou hast overcome." It would have been better for him to have said, "Lord, have mercy upon me!" But, alas! this was entirely out of his reach, in consequence of the hardness of his heart, contracted by an uninterrupted course of sinning, and by having rejected and despised the mercy of Christ.

3. This hardness of heart, is that

terrible darkness which, in the end, overtakes all such as refuse to walk in the light whilst they have it. It is the just punishment inflicted on those that blaspheme the truth, as Pharaoh did, when he asked: "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice, to let Israel go? I know not the Lord." Exodus 5:2. Therefore it was but just that he should the more grievously feel the overruling power of God, by being made an example to the whole world, and a lasting monument of the indignation of the Lord, and of the weakness of men who vainly presume to oppose him.

4. In like manner were the Jews of old struck with blindness and hardness of heart, when they refused to hearken to the voice of the Lord, having been warned by Moses long before, that this would certainly come to pass. "The Lord," says he, "shall smite thee with madness, and blindness, and astonishment of heart." Deut. 28:28. This actually did befall them, as may be seen, Isaiah, chap. 6:9–12. Whereby it is manifest, that such hardness of heart is the most righteous punishment of unbelief, of contempt of God, and the heavenly truth declared by him; according to the words of St. Paul: "With all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause, God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie." 2 Thess. 2:10, 11. Whence it plainly appears, why God is used to strike men with such terrible blindness and hardness of heart; namely, because they "receive not the love of the truth."

5. And, indeed, the man from whom God takes away his offered grace, is surely most wretched and miserable; neither can he of himself at any time return into the right way. As a proof of this, we have the examples of Pharaoh and Julian. He from whom the Lord removes his light, must of necessity live in darkness. God removes it, however, from those only who refuse to walk in it; *neither does he take his grace from any, but from those that boldly reject it.*

6. It is in this sense that the words of St. Paul are to be taken: "'I will have mercy (saith he) on whom I will have mercy.' Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy; and whom he will he hardeneth." Rom. 9:15, 18. But truly the Lord hath pity on all them who freely receive his mercy; as, on the contrary, he hardeneth those that reject and blaspheme the offer of his grace. And it is this wilful resistance for which St. Paul reproves the Jews: "It was necessary," says he, "that the word of God should first have been spoken to you; but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles." "And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life, believed" (Acts 13:46, 48): that is, as many as did not resist and obstinately cast away the word of grace, as the means of faith. It was because the Jews were guilty of this, that they could not believe: for the Lord hath not ordained any one to eternal salvation, who disdainfully rejects his word, and proves disobedient to the offer of his grace.

7. The ordination to life eternal, or the election of grace (Rom. 11:5), is fully brought to pass in Jesus Christ, with this promise annexed, that God

offers his grace to all by the Gospel; those who receive it are ordained to eternal life; and whosoever reject it thereby "judge themselves unworthy of eternal life," as St. Paul expresses it. That is, by their own fault they make themselves unworthy of that blessing, and debar themselves from that universal grace which is displayed in the Gospel; and so putting their own names out of the book of life, which is Christ, they resist the good work of God by their own contumacy, and, consequently, cannot obtain that true saving faith, which the Word begets.

8. And here let us not deceive ourselves, by vainly supposing that they only reject the word of God, who do not outwardly embrace the faith and doctrine of Christ (such as Mahometans and Jews); and that those who profess the Christian faith, and adhere to the doctrine of the Gospel, cannot possibly be deemed wilful despisers of the offer of mercy. Certain it is, that all who will not follow the footsteps of Christ, nor take his life upon them, nor walk in the light, fall under this heavy charge. And for this cause God is moved to take from them the light of his word, and of pure doctrine. "I," saith Christ, "am the light of the world: he that followeth me, shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." John 8 : 12.

9. Hence we learn that whoever follows the example of Christ, and lives his life, shall be in no danger of being misled by any delusion and error. He shall also escape that blindness and hardness of heart, which an empty confessor of the Christian faith draws upon himself. Consider here, on the one hand, the many proud, noble, learned, ingenious, and mighty men of this world; and, on the other, the errors, blindness, and delusions, into which they are plunged. Truly, those delusions arise from no other source, than because men do not live in Christ, but are averse to the imitation of his holy life; and therefore cannot have the light of life.

10. From the same source also proceed those "workings of Satan," and those "strong delusions," together with all the "lying wonders" mentioned by St. Paul (2 Thess. 2 : 9–11), and which more and more increase upon us, because the world is not willing to follow Christ, and by this means, to be preserved from delusion and error. "For what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord (therefore) hath Christ with Belial?" 2 Cor. 6 : 14, 15. That is to say, Purity of doctrine, and divine knowledge, cannot remain with those that live in the devil, in darkness, in pride, in covetousness, and filthy pleasure. How should the pure doctrine dwell with those who exhibit impurity of life and manners? Nothing, certainly, can be more irreconcilable, than purity of doctrine and an impure life.

11. If, therefore, we would preserve pure doctrine, we must be wholly changed in our minds, and have no part with the world, and with unchristian actions. We must "awake" (Eph. 5 : 14) from the lethargy of sin, and shake off the works of darkness, that so Christ may enlighten us again with the light of true faith. Whence it is plain, that whosoever does not follow the footsteps of Christ, nor imitate him in his love, humility, meekness, patience, and obedience, he must necessarily be deceived, and stray from the knowledge of God; since he does not walk in the way which leads to truth.

12. On the contrary, if we but lived in Christ, if we walked in his love and humility, and directed all our endeavors and studies purely to this *one object*, that the flesh be mortified, and the life of Christ raised within us; that through him we might overcome ourselves, and triumph over the flesh, the world, and the devil; if this were but once effected, there would then remain very little contention and strife about the doctrine, and heresies would of themselves fall to the ground.

13. We have an example of most strange delusion in Ahab, who, on account of his wicked and tyrannical life, was seduced by four hundred false prophets. 1 Kings 22. It was by their encouragement that he undertook that fatal expedition against the Syrians, in contempt of the true prophet Micaiah, who positively foretold his death in that battle. But being led by a false light, he rejected the truth, and gave credit to lying prophets, who prophesied nothing but peace and prosperity to him. Hence the justice of God met him, according to the word of the true prophet, and by due desert the dogs licked his blood.

14. In this is verified the word of St. Paul: "The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ should shine unto them." 2 Cor. 4:4. And is not the same judgment threatened against all hypocrites, who boast of Christ and his doctrine, but deny him in their life and actions? For thus saith the Lord through the prophet: "Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honor me, but have removed their heart far from me; therefore the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid." Isa. 29:13, 14. Concerning the prophets in particular, the Lord has plainly declared, that he has "covered the prophets, the rulers, and seers." Hence the vision shall become as a "sealed book," etc. Verse 10, 11. And as for the Jews themselves, the apostle has told us, that there is a "vail upon their heart," preventing their eyes from beholding the true Messiah; which, however, shall be "taken away when they turn to the Lord." 2 Cor. 3:15, 16.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

SHOWING THAT THE PURITY OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE DIVINE WORD IS MAINTAINED NOT ONLY BY DISCUSSIONS AND PUBLICATIONS, BUT ALSO BY TRUE REPENTANCE AND HOLINESS OF LIFE.

Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. That good thing which was committed unto thee, keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.—2 Tim. 1:13, 14.

IT is very necessary, that the purity of doctrine, and the truth of the holy Christian faith, should be maintained and defended against all false teachers. For this we have the example of the holy prophets, who, with great zeal, preached against false and idolatrous prophets under the old law;

of the Son of God, who sharply disputed against the Pharisees and scribes at Jerusalem; of St. John, the Evangelist, who wrote his Gospel against the heretical Ebionites and Cerinthus, and the Revelation (chap. 2 : 6, 15), against the false church of the Nicolaitans and others.

2. Thus, too, St. Paul vigorously defended the doctrine of justification by faith (Rom. 3 : 20, etc.), of good works (2 Cor. 9 : 8, etc.), of the resurrection of the dead (1 Cor. 15 : 1, etc.), of Christian liberty (1 Cor. 9 ; 10—Gal. 5 : 1, etc.), etc., against certain false apostles who had intruded into the Church. We have, further, the example of the holy bishops and fathers of the primitive church, who, following the example set them by the apostles, strenuously opposed in their public controversial writings, the Pagan superstitions, and the heresies of those times. Nay, for the same purpose General Councils were gathered by the Christian emperors, who condemned the chief heretics that infested the church at that time; such as the Arians, Macedonians, Nestorians, and Eutychians; not to mention the example of Martin Luther, by whose polemical books and writings, the papacy, and other sects, have in these latter days been successfully assailed.

3. It remains, therefore, that preaching, writing, and disputation against heretics, must be continued, to the preserving of the purity of doctrine, and of true religion. For this reason, the apostle will also have "a bishop to be able both to exhort and convince the gainsayers." Titus 1 : 9. Though this in itself is both lawful and commendable, yet it has so fallen out by the abuse of it, that disputations and controversies are increased to such an extent in these days, that the Christian life, true repentance, love, and godliness, are, as it were forgotten; as if the sum and substance of the Christian religion consisted in arguing, and writing books of controversy, rather than in that unfeigned holiness of life, and purity of manners, which the Gospel requires.

4. For consider the examples of the holy Prophets and Apostles, as also of the Son of God himself. They did not barely dispute against false prophets and apostles, and the superstitions maintained by them; but also with great zeal and vigor exhorted to true repentance, and a holy life. Their sermons were accompanied with power and energy; and they made it appear, that by wickedness and impenitence, true religion and worship were destroyed, the Church laid waste, and kingdoms and countries visited with the plague, war, and famine. And all this exactly came to pass even as they said. Of this complexion is that declaration of the Prophet, where he denounces to the Jews, "that because the vineyard of the Lord did not bring forth grapes, but wild grapes, the Lord had decreed to lay it waste." Isaiah 5 : 4, 6. Whence it appears, that impiety is the cause, why God takes away his Word from us. And does not the Lord speak to the same effect, in the words recorded by St. John? "Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you." John 12 : 35. But what is it to walk in the light, except it be to imitate Christ in his life, and to have the same mind which was in him? And what does the Lord intimate by the "darkness coming upon us," but the loss of the Gospel, and of the purity of the Christian doctrine? All this may abundantly convince us, that without repentance and holiness of life, no soul can be illuminated

with the saving light of the Gospel. For the Holy Ghost, who is the true enlightener of hearts, flees from the ungodly, and chooses holy souls only, to make them friends of God. And if the beginning of wisdom is the fear of God (Ps. 111 : 10), who can doubt that impiety and carnal security are the beginning of folly, ignorance, and blindness?

5. The true knowledge of Christ, and profession of his doctrine, consist not in words only, but in deeds and a holy life, as St. Paul says: "They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate." Titus 1 : 16. And again; "They have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof." 2 Tim. 3 : 5. By this we are taught, that Christ and his Gospel are denied by a wicked life, as well as by words; and that he has not the true knowledge of Christ, who puts it not into practice. A man who never tasted in his heart the humility, meekness, patience, and love of Christ, cannot know Christ himself; and, consequently, in the time of trouble, cannot freely confess him. Whoever confesses the doctrine of Christ, and rejects him in his life, confesses him only in part; and whoever preaches the doctrine of Christ without his life, preaches Christ only in part. The world abounds with books of controversy, written in defence of the *doctrine*, but very few living books are extant concerning a Christian *life*. Now what is doctrine without life, but a tree without fruit? Or how should he follow the doctrine of Christ, who refuses to follow him in his life? For the sum and substance of the doctrine of Jesus Christ is "charity, out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned." 1 Tim. 1 : 5. But we live in an age, wherein there is so vast a number of disputants and reasoners in matters of doctrine, that one would think they had nothing more at heart than the promotion of religion and piety: whereas, upon a closer search, they are found to be inwardly full of malice and pride, envy and avarice. For this reason the apostle hath joined together *faith* and *love*, when he commands us to "hold fast the form of sound words." 2 Tim. 1 : 13. *Life* and *doctrine*, as he intends to show, must go hand in hand together, and never be put asunder in the great work of salvation.

6. Though we do not in the slightest degree affirm, that by our own efforts and piety, eternal life is obtained (for "we are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation," 1 Pet. 1 : 5): yet it is certain, that by an ungodly life, the Spirit of God, with all his gifts, is banished; amongst which gifts, faith, knowledge, understanding, and wisdom, are not the least. Therefore it follows again, that without a holy life, purity of doctrine cannot be preserved; and that the wicked who will not follow Christ in his life, cannot be enlightened with the true light of the Gospel. On the contrary, those that walk in the light, that is, who persevere in the blessed footsteps of Christ, are illuminated by the true light (John 1 : 9), which is Christ, and are hereby preserved from the danger of delusions and errors. To this effect, that holy and enlightened writer, Tauler, has said: "As soon as a man dedicates and yields himself up to God, and denies his own will and flesh, then immediately the good Spirit of God begins to illuminate him, and to endue him with solid and sound knowledge; because this man truly keeps in his

heart the true spiritual sabbath, and rests from all sinful lusts, and from his own will and works." This sentence is to be understood of the state after conversion, and of daily illumination and growth in divine gifts and graces.

7. Not without cause, then, doth the Lord say, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life." John 14 : 6. He calls himself the way, as showing the way unto us. And how did he show it? Truly, not in his doctrine only, but also in his most holy life. This life of our blessed Redeemer consisted in a true and unfeigned devotedness to God, leading us in the way to truth and to life, as the substance of our whole religion, and the summary of all the commandments of God. This book of life contains in it many great and arduous lessons, to learn which were sufficient to take up our whole time. Here is inculcated the exercise of true repentance, and of that living practical faith which attends it; here the practice of love, hope, meekness, patience, and humility, are to be studied; here the duty of prayer, and of the fear of God, is explained: all which taken together, make up the whole life of Christ, set us as a pattern to follow. This is that "strait gate," and that "narrow way," which few can find. Matt. 7 : 14. This is the book of life, which but few read, though all things are comprised in it which a Christian ought to know and to practise; so that we shall need no other book in order to our eternal salvation. Here is the reason why also the Holy Scripture is contained in a few books, that it might appear that Christianity does not consist in a multitude of volumes, but in a living faith, and in a serious imitation of Christ. For the wise man says: "Of making many books there is no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh." Wherefore, let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: "Fear God, and keep his commandments." Eccles. 12 : 12, 13.

8. We are told in the parable, that the devil, when men are asleep, cometh and soweth tares among the wheat, and goeth his way. Matt. 13 : 25. This teaches us, that when men lay aside the works of repentance, and indulge themselves in the sleep of sin, of carnal security, of love of the world, and of temporal care and concerns; then the devil gradually scatters his seed of false doctrine in the field of pride (Gen. 3 : 5): whence arise various sects, schisms, and heresies. For by the sin of pride both angels and men lost the true light with which they were at first endued. Pride is the original source of all delusions and errors, which have been most unhappily brought into the world. If Satan, and Adam, the first man, had continued in a state of humility, as did Christ when he conversed among men, then never had any error or temptation invaded this world. But now there is no other means for our recovery left, except that which is taught by St. Paul: "Awake, thou that sleepest, and Christ shall give thee light" (Eph. 5 : 14): convincing us thereby, that no man can be divinely enlightened, who has not shaken off his sinful lethargy; that is, his carnal security, profaneness, and impiety. The same is attested by St. Peter: "Repent, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2 : 38); and by the Lord himself, in that saying: "The world cannot receive the Spirit of truth, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him." John 14 : 17. And what is the *world*, but a life passed without God?

9. Again, when the Lord says: "By their fruits ye shall know them" (Matt. 7:20); does he not signify the fruits of a good and holy life, as the proper marks whereby true and false Christians may be discerned? A naked, empty profession of the Christian faith, will be no safe foundation upon which to rely. Any false Christian may cover himself with the *sheep's clothing* of a verbal profession of the Christian faith; when inwardly and in his heart he is anything but a true Christian. However, be the lives of the professors of Christianity ever so vain and wicked, it does not follow hence, that the whole doctrine is also false and corrupted, as some would insinuate, vainly condemning our doctrine on account of the wickedness of some of its professed adherents. If this were true, the doctrine of Christ and of his apostles would not escape the charge of error and falsehood; because even in their days many impious characters intruded into the church, and made a fair profession of the Christian faith. A profane life is no sufficient proof of false doctrine in general, though it may give us an insight into the individual himself, whether he be a true or a false Christian. Truly, he cannot believe aright, who leads a life opposed to the nature and properties of a divine faith. Such a man is no more a believer, or a Christian, than a dead body is a man. As many, therefore, as are of the number of such corrupt and unfruitful trees, are fit for nothing but to be hewn down and cast into the fire. Matt. 7:19.

10. In order to understand this the better, we ought to inquire into the nature of a sound and saving faith, and the peculiar properties that attend it. And in the first place, a true, saving faith, works by love. Gal. 5:6. By faith man is made "a new creature" (Gal. 6:15); he is thereby born again, and united with God. By faith, "Christ dwells" and operates "in his heart." Eph. 3:17. By faith the whole kingdom of God is established in the soul, and the divine Spirit "purifies and enlightens the heart." Acts 15:9. And truly, the Scripture copiously sets forth these and similar properties that accompany true faith. Thus the apostle says: "He that is joined unto the Lord (by faith) is one spirit." 1 Cor. 6:17. And what is it to be one spirit with Christ, but to have the same mind, the same heart and will, which are in him? And this oneness of spirit must needs suppose that new, holy, and heavenly life of Christ which is to be raised within us. To the same purpose it is said: "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature" (2 Cor. 5:17); where *to be in Christ*, is not only to believe in him, but also to live in him. Again, "I will betroth thee unto me forever; I will even betroth thee to me in faithfulness." Hos. 2:19, 20. This sentence can signify no less, than that a man by faith is wholly and spiritually united to Christ: so that where faith is, there Christ is; where Christ is, there a holy life abides in man; where the life of Christ is, there also is his love; and where love is, there is God himself, who "is love" (1 John 4:8), and there is also the Holy Ghost. And in this divine order all these heavenly transactions combine; even as the head is one with the members, and as the cause is linked with the effect. And this connection of faith and life, St. Peter admirably enforces, when he bids us to "give all diligence to add to faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to

patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity." "For if these things," says he, "be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins." 2 Pet. 1: 5–9. Here the apostle evidently declares, that in whomsoever this union of faith and of life is not to be found, he is destitute of all saving knowledge of Christ, and walks in darkness. For it is the property of true faith to change a man wholly, to renew, and to quicken him in Christ; so that henceforth man may live and dwell in Christ, and Christ again may live and dwell in man.

CHAPTER XL.

SUNDRY RULES FOR LEADING A HOLY LIFE.

Exercise thyself unto godliness. For godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.—1 TIM. 4: 7, 8.

IN this apostolical sentence is contained a brief description of a Christian's life, and of the main study about which he is employed, namely, the study of godliness, or of Christian piety, which comprehends in it the whole train of Christian virtues. The apostle makes use of two motives to recommend this heavenly study, and the constant practice of it. *First*, says he, "Godliness is profitable unto all things." Godliness is of most admirable service, as soon as our words and actions are influenced by it. It renders the whole life acceptable to God, and useful to our neighbor. The *second* motive is, because godliness is accompanied with a gracious reward both in this life, as appears from the examples of Joseph, of Daniel, and of others, as well as in that which is to come; where we shall reap without ceasing, provided we do not faint while we dwell here. Gal. 6: 9. For our better encouragement in the practice of piety, let us endeavor to keep in remembrance the following rules and considerations.

I. If thou even canst not live up to that degree of holiness which the word of God requires, and which thou thyself desirest, yet thou must never cease *ardently* to *wish* for it; for such holy breathings are always acceptable to God. God does not so much regard the outward action of a man, as the heart whence the action proceeds. But after all, never neglect to crucify thy flesh, and never permit it to rule over thee.

II. In all that thou thinkest and doest, be careful to preserve the *purity of thy heart.* Set a watch over it, lest thou be defiled with proud thoughts, words, or actions; with wrath, or other such works of the flesh, and of the devil. Sin opens the door to the devil, and shuts the heart against God.

III. Study continually to maintain the Christian liberty of thy soul, and

do not suffer thyself to be enslaved, or brought into bondage, by any inordinate love of the creature, or of the things of this world, whose lord and master thou oughtest to be. Consider the value of thy soul, which certainly is of a more noble nature than this present perishing world. Why shouldest thou degrade it so far, as to subject it to the frail, base, and frivolous things of this life?

IV. Beware of the care and *sorrow of this world*, because it worketh death. 2 Cor. 7 : 10. As *worldly* sorrow begetteth death, so *godly* sorrow begetteth life, and lays up an eternal treasure! Worldly sorrow springs from avarice and envy; from excessive care; from unbelief and impatience; and other temporal sources. Godly sorrow proceeds from a knowledge of thy sins, and those eternal punishments which follow them. This sorrow produces many salutary effects in a penitent soul, and "worketh repentance to salvation, not to be repented of;" being attended with spiritual joy, and solid peace or tranquillity of mind. No loss of a temporal kind ought to afflict thee so much as the remembrance of thy sins, by which thou hast offended the infinite goodness of God.

V. If thou canst not bear thy cross with joy and cheerfulness, yet take it at least with *patience* and *humility*, and acquiesce calmly in the divine will and providence. For, truly, the will of God is always good; nor does it intend anything but thy benefit and salvation. Whatsoever, therefore, God shall be pleased to appoint thee in his wisdom, do thou gratefully accept it, and be either joyful or sorrowful, poor or rich, high or low, vile or excellent, as He orders thy lot. Let this saying always be in thy mind: "Thus it seemeth good unto God, and so it must needs be expedient and useful for me also. His will, not mine, be done." Let not that, therefore, which pleases God, displease thee; but rather rejoice that all things are ordered according to His pleasure and thy salvation. Remember that "the Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works." Ps. 145 : 17. Hence it is but just that the will of God should be done, because it is always good and profitable; and that thy own will should be subdued and unaccomplished, because it is always evil and hurtful.

VI. Whenever the Lord visits thy soul with heavenly joy, accept the same *with gratitude and humility*. But when he is pleased to withdraw the comfortable light of his presence, then consider that the mortification of the flesh must needs be of greater profit to thee than exalted joy in the spirit. Through overmuch spiritual joy, many fall into spiritual pride. But whatever causes mortification and sorrow, is far more useful in subduing the flesh, than that which is delightful and pleasing to nature. The Lord best knows whom to lead in a pleasant and agreeable path, and who are to be brought through an unpleasant, stony, and difficult way. Always esteem it best to arrive at thy journey's end by that way which divine Wisdom has chosen for thee, however different it may be from thine own choice, or from the devices of thine own heart. Remember, that "sorrow is better than laughter;" and that "by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better." And if thou wilt be wise, trust to the experience of the wise man, who tells thee furthermore, that "the heart of the wise is in the house of mourning; but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth." Eccl. 7 : 3, 4.

VII. Make an offering to God *of all that thou hast, and undertakest.* If thou canst not bring offerings of a high and exalted devotion, of prayer, of thanksgiving, and of other similar acts of religion, offer at least what thou hast, with a good will, and a fervent desire. *Wish*, at least, that it may prove acceptable unto the Lord; for to have such a desire, or to be willing to have it, is no contemptible offering, but is very agreeable to the kindness of God. In what measure thou *desirest* to offer up thy devotion, thy prayer, and praise; in that measure God accepts the same. He requires no more at thy hands than he himself works in thee by his grace: nor canst thou return him more than he has first conferred on thee. In the meantime, entreat the Lord Jesus, that he would graciously please to supply what is defective in thee, by his own more perfect oblation and sacrifice: because he, and he only, is the perfection of our imperfect worship and service. Say, therefore, in faith: "O my God, and my Father, I beseech thee, let my devotion, my prayer, and thanksgiving, together with all the acts of my faith and worship, be graciously accepted by thee in thy beloved Son, Jesus Christ. Esteem them, not according to what they are in themselves, but according to what they are made by the merit of the all-sufficient sacrifice offered up by thy Son. O look upon that, and upon all that he has wrought for me in the flesh; and as his most perfect works must needs be pleasing to thee, so let mine also be acceptable to thee for his sake. He, O my God, shall abundantly make up whatsoever is defective in me." By this means, our devotion, our prayer, and thanksgiving, how imperfect, weak, and obscure soever they may be in themselves, acquire a certain lustre, worth, and dignity derived from the merit of Christ, whereby our works are rendered acceptable to the Lord. As a naked and unclean infant is offensive to every one that sees it, but becomes sweet and lovely when it is thoroughly cleansed, and covered with fine linen: in like manner, all the works which thou doest in thy natural state, are polluted with sin, and of no account before God; but no sooner art thou covered with the perfection of Christ (Isa. 61: 10), than thy works are acceptable to God. As fruit, which is not valuable in itself, surprises the spectator into a love of it, when served up in vessels of precious gold: so our prayers and acts of devotion, though of no account in themselves, are exalted in Jesus Christ, in whom, as *in the beloved, we are made accepted* with God. Eph. 1: 6.

VIII. If thy sins and manifold frailties (as they should do), make thee sad, yet *let them not lead thee to despair.* If they be many in number, remember that there is yet more mercy with Christ, and "plenteous redemption with him." Ps. 130: 7. If thy imperfections be ever so great, remember that Christ's merits are yet greater, and say with the royal penitent: "Have mercy upon me, O Lord, according to the multitude of thy tender mercies!" Ps. 51: 1. And when, by the grace of God, thou truly repentest, and beholdest Christ Jesus, that great sacrifice for sin, then God himself repents of the evil which was to be inflicted upon thee; and absolution and remission of sin instantly follow so good and salutary a sorrow. Ezek. 18: 23; 33: 11. As the leper, upon his application to Christ, was immediately delivered from his evil, so is also the penitent sinner. No sooner did he

say, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean;" than Christ freely replied: "I will; be thou clean." Matt. 8 : 2, 3. So also the merciful God, inwardly and in the spirit, makes thee clean, comforts thee, and says: "Be of good cheer; thy sins are forgiven thee." Matt. 9 : 2. This wonderful mercy of the Lord in cleansing and absolving thee of thy sins, as it is forcibly represented by the example of that leper, so it ought by no means to give thee an occasion to sin the more; but to love God the more, and to say, "Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me bless his holy name." Ps. 103 : 1.

IX. Let not injuries, reproaches, and revilings, provoke thee at any time to wrath, indignation, or revenge; but rather *take them as so many trials of* thy heart, and of the inward state of thy soul. Hereby God designs to *prove* thee, that it may appear what is hidden within thee, and whether meekness and humility, or wrath and pride, sway thy mind. For that which lies concealed in a man, is stirred up and made manifest by reproaches and provocations. If, therefore, thy heart be endued with meekness and lowliness, thou wilt easily bear contempt and injuries; nay, thou wilt accept them as so many paternal chastisements designed for the good of thy soul. Moreover, thou must consider, that contempt and reproaches are part of the chastisements which the Almighty sends, and thou shouldst patiently bear whatever the Lord shall be pleased to allot to thee. "Let us go forth," says the apostle, "unto him, bearing his reproach." Heb. 13 : 13. Behold with what lowliness of heart did he undergo the affronts of a profane world! And should not we submit to the same with meekness, and with an unshaken evenness of mind? Say not then, "Should I suffer these things from so contemptible a fellow as this?" but rather submit, in consideration of that patient and meek spirit which was in Christ, and displayed itself in his whole life and conduct. Lastly, consider the kindness of God towards those that suffer for his sake. So faithful is he, and so kind to those that bear any disgrace on his account, that he confers the greater marks of honor and favor upon them. Thus David, when Shimei vented his malice upon him, took it for a pledge that God would bestow a token of great honor upon him; and this accordingly came to pass. "It may be," says he, "that the Lord will look on mine affliction, and that the Lord will requite me good for his cursing this day," and turn his curse into a blessing. 2 Sam. 16 : 12. Be not, therefore, at all disturbed at the evil report that wicked men may raise against thee; but rejoice rather, since the Spirit of glory rests on those that are reproached for the name of Christ. 1 Peter 4 : 14.

X. Study to overcome and to pacify thine enemies, by bestowing upon them tokens of *love and kindness.* No man will ever be reconciled by wrath, or revenge, or returning evil for evil, for victory consists in virtue, not in vice. And as one devil does not drive out another, so it cannot be expected that one evil should be subdued by another; or that enmity against thee should be extinguished by affronts and provocations offered by thee. A man that is full of sores and bruises, is not likely to be healed by the addition of more blows; and if he be so mad as to beat and to cut himself, he is to be pitied, and to be treated with the greater kindness and lenity. In like manner, if a man be full of *spiritual*

distemper, and of hatred, he is to be handled with the more love and gentleness; if, perhaps, by such lenient means as these, he may be softened into a better temper. Consider the method which God himself uses for overcoming our natural obstinacy. Does he not conquer our malice with his goodness, and our wrath with his love? And does he not invite us to repentance by many endearing marks of love and benignity? Rom. 2:4. This method is prescribed by St. Paul: "Be not," says he, "overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." Rom. 12:21. This is victory indeed.

XI. When thou observest that God has adorned thy neighbor with gifts above thee, take heed *not to envy him* on that account; but rather rejoice and give thanks to God for the same. Consider, that since all true believers make up together but *one* body, it must needs follow, that the beauty of every member is communicated to the whole body, and to every member thereof. On the other hand, when thou perceivest the misery of thy neighbor, lament over it as if it were thine own; considering that the condition of all men is equally subject to evil, and that misery and affliction are the lot of mankind. Christ hath also set thee here an example. And, truly, whoever does not commiserate and sympathize with the misery of his neighbor, let him pretend to be what he may, he is no living member of the body of Christ. For did not Christ look upon our misery as his own, and by compassionating our deplorable state, deliver us from all our miseries? This mutual love and sympathy, are inculcated by St. Paul: "Bear ye one another's burdens," says he, "and so fulfil the law of Christ." Gal. 6:2.

XII. As for *love* and *hatred* in relation to thy neighbor, make the following distinction. It is but fit that thou shouldest hate his vices and crimes as the very works of the devil; but then, beware of hating the *person* whilst thou abhorrest his *sin*. On the contrary, it is thy duty to bewail the case of thy neighbor, who, being carried away by so many irregular passions, enjoys no solid rest in his soul. Offer up his cause to God, and pray for him, as Christ did for his enemies, when he was nailed to the cross. Luke 23:34. Do not, therefore, hate any *man*, but hate his *vices* only; for whosoever hates a man, and seeks his ruin, can in no wise be pleasing to God; since it is the very nature of God to be kind, and to desire that "all men should be saved, and come unto the knowledge of the truth." 1 Tim. 2:4. This was also the end for which Christ took our flesh upon him. He came into the world, "not to destroy men's lives, but to save them." Luke 9:56.

XIII. Consider all men as being frail and imperfect, but none as more frail and imperfect than thyself; for before God, all men stand equally guilty, and there is no difference. We have all sinned, and have thereby been deprived of the image of God, and of all the glory which attended it. Rom. 3:23. How great a sinner, therefore, thy neighbor may be, never fondly persuade thyself, that thou art better before God. Remember this warning of the apostle: "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall." 1 Cor. 10:12. He that makes himself the lowest of all men, is in the fairest way of being preserved, by the grace of God, unto salvation. And certain it is, that thou standest no less in need of the grace and mercy of God, than the greatest

of sinners. Where there is a great measure of humility, there is also a great measure of grace. Wherefore St. Paul accounted himself the "chief of sinners" (1 Tim. 1 : 15); and it was in this order he obtained mercy, and had so much long-suffering bestowed upon him. And in another place he declares that he will glory in nothing but in "his infirmities, that the power of Christ might rest upon him." 2 Cor. 12 : 9.

XIV. True illumination is always accompanied with a contempt of the things of the world. As the children of the world have their inheritance here upon earth; so the children of God have theirs laid up above in heaven. The treasures which the children of this world have chiefly at heart, are temporal honors, perishing riches, earthly splendor and glory. But the treasures of the children of God are poverty and contempt, persecution and reproach, the cross and death, trouble and sorrow. Thus did Moses prefer "the reproach of Christ before the treasures in Egypt;" and the affliction of the people of God, before the pleasures of sin. Heb. 11 : 25, 26.

XV. Remember, that by the name of a Christian written in heaven, is intimated that solid, practical *knowledge of Christ* which is grounded *in faith*, and by which we are transplanted into Christ. From this knowledge flow all the living virtues which the Lord will praise in the great day of retribution. Matt. 25 : 34, etc. He will then also bring to light all those treasures which we have laid up in heaven (1 Tim. 6 : 19), together with all such works as have been wrought in God. John 3:21. Never has a saint lived upon earth, but he has been particularly eminent in one virtue or other; and this virtue shall never be forgotten. Ps. 112 : 6. Whether it be faith, love, mercy, patience, or any other virtue in the practice of which he has been so conspicuous, it shall make up that eternal name which is written in heaven. Rev. 2 : 17; 3 : 12. This will be the note and character of the saints, and their eternal memorial before God. But of this, more shall be said in Book II.

CHAPTER XLI.

THE WHOLE OF CHRISTIANITY CONSISTS IN THE RESTORATION OF THE IMAGE OF GOD IN MAN, AND THE DESTRUCTION OF THE IMAGE OF SATAN.

But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.—2 Cor. 3 : 18.

IN the *true knowledge* of Christ, wherein is comprehended that of his Person, offices, benefits, and heavenly and eternal gifts, consists *life everlasting*. John 17 : 3. This knowledge is kindled in our hearts by the Divine Spirit, and is a new light shining forth with increasing brightness, and passing on from glory to glory. It is like a metallic body, which, by constant polishing, becomes every day more brilliant; or

like a tender infant, which, by a daily supply of food, grows up in vigor and strength. No sooner is the righteousness of Christ, through faith, conferred upon a returning sinner, than he is also really born again, and the image of God is daily renewed within him. His spiritual growth, or the renovation of his mind, goes on, however, in a successive manner, from one degree to another, for he has not yet become a "perfect man in Christ." Eph. 4 : 13. He is a child for some time; but is continually nourished by the Divine Spirit, and daily brought to a greater conformity with the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. For the whole life of a Christian upon earth, is properly nothing else than a continual *renewing* of the image of God in his soul: so that he may constantly live in the new birth, and daily mortify that which is old and corrupt, till the body of sin be eventually destroyed. Rom. 6 : 4. This life must be begun in this world, that so it may be perfected in that which is to come. Whereas, in whomsoever the renewal of this divine life shall not be begun before his departure from this world, in him it never shall be accomplished. Wherefore I have thought it might be well briefly to repeat what is here meant by the *image of God*, which is to be revived; and what by the *image of the devil*, which is to be obliterated and destroyed in man's soul: for in the right knowledge of these two, the substance of our whole religion consists. It is the main point upon which all turns, and from which many other articles (as that of Original Sin, free-will, repentance, conversion, faith, justification, prayer, the new birth, sanctification, and lastly, obedience, and the whole practice of a religious life), borrow no small light. Of this, the following remarks will give an account.

3. The soul of man is an immortal spirit, endowed of God with excellent faculties; as the understanding, will, memory, and other powers and affections.

4. See that thou turn all these towards thy God, in order to behold him therein as in a mirror; and, by beholding him, to have his image gradually formed in thy soul. In this sense the apostle speaks of "the glory of the Lord," which we behold "with an open face," without vail and shadows. 2. Cor. 3 : 18.

5. As God is a truly good and holy Being; so also were the substance of the soul, and its true nature and essence, originally good and holy. And as in God there is nothing of evil; even so was the soul of man, in the beginning, free from all manner of evil. As in God there is nothing but what is right; so in the soul there was nothing at first but what was right also. For He is the rock, whose "work is perfect;" even "a God of truth, and without iniquity, just and right is he." Deut. 32 : 4; Ps. 92 : 15. As God is wise, so was also the human soul full of divine and spiritual knowledge, of heavenly and eternal wisdom. And as the divine wisdom ordered all things in number, weight, and measure, and knew the powers of all creatures, as well in heaven as in earth: so also was the mind of man possessed of the same light and knowledge.

6. And as it was with the understanding, so it was with the will: for as the one was the image and reflection of the divine understanding, so was the other of the divine will, in everything. It was holy as the pattern was holy, and conformed to the will of God. Hence, as God himself

is, so was the human soul; righteous, loving, merciful, long-suffering, patient, meek, gentle, true, and pure. Exod. 34:6; Ps. 103:8; Joel 2:13. Yea, all the passions or affections, all the appetites, and motions of the heart, being made most perfectly conformable to the motions and affections of the divine mind, partook of this conformity of the will of man to that of God. As, therefore, God is LOVE, so all the affections and motions of man, in his first state, breathed nothing but pure love. As God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are ONE in an unspeakable and eternal bond of love; so all the affections and desires of man, burned with a most perfect and ardent love, and he cleaved unto God fully with all the powers and faculties which he had; "with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might" (Deut. 6:5); so that man verily loved God more than himself, and preferred God and His honor, to himself and his own.

7. But as the image of God shone forth in the *soul*, so the image of the soul again shone forth in and from the *body*. This, therefore, was holy, chaste, and pure throughout, not subject to any unclean motion or lust. It was undefiled and without blemish. It was in every respect, beautiful, well proportioned, and graceful; of vigorous health, and possessed of a constitution even out of the very danger of sickness. It was such as death itself had no power over, and it was perfectly free from pain, listlessness, passion, grief, and old age, now the common attendants and warnings of man's mortality. In a word, the whole man, both in soul and body, was pure, holy, righteous, and every way acceptable to God. For, in order that man might be the image of God, it was necessary that his body should be holy, and conformable to God, as well as his soul. Accordingly, St. Paul both exhorts and prays, that the *body*, together with the *spirit* and *soul*, be *sanctified wholly;* and be preserved holy and blameless unto the coming of our Lord. 1 Thess. 5:23. For since man is made up of soul and body, and exercises both bodily and spiritual functions, there was a necessity that the instrument through which the soul was to act, should be pliable and obedient, adapted to the nature of the soul, and holy as the soul was holy; to the end that the holy and righteous soul, might finish her work through the body without any obstacle or resistance. As, therefore, the soul burned with the pure love of God: so did all the powers of the body manifest and exert themselves in the love of God and man. As the soul was altogether merciful; so also the body was, with its whole might, and all its faculties, impelled to tenderness and compassion. As chastity shone forth from the soul, which was altogether pure; so the whole body, in like manner, with all the inward and outward senses and powers thereof, visibly set forth the most perfect purity and chastity. To conclude, the virtues no less gloriously shone in the body, than in the soul itself; so that the body was the holy instrument of the soul, in everything suited to it, and worked together with it. And hence man in the *state of innocency*, was able to love God *with all his heart, with all his soul, with all his strength, and with all his mind, and to love his neighbor as himself:* which is the very substance both of the old and new law given to man. Deut. 6:5; Matt. 22:37, 39; Luke 10:27. Hence, as often as God calls for the heart of man, we are to under-

stand the *whole man*, both as to body and soul, and the powers, faculties, and operations of both. In this sense, the word "*heart*" is frequently taken in Scripture; so that under it are comprehended all the powers of the soul, as the understanding, will, and memory, together with all the desires and affections attendant on them. So when God demands a man's *soul*, he, under that name, requires not a part, but the whole of a man. He must, in all his powers, be conformed to God, and renewed in Christ Jesus: and thus man, having put off the old nature, and being renewed in the spirit of his mind, must also *walk* in newness of life, and in the spirit by which he was begotten again. Gal. 5 : 16; Eph. 4 : 23.

8. Moreover, there was a *perfect joy in God*, which accompanied this perfection of holiness, righteousness, and divine love, in man. By this, all the faculties and springs, both of soul and body, were most powerfully affected: for wherever divine holiness resides, there also divine joy must be present. These two are knit together with an everlasting bond, and make up the very image of God. Yet, as in this life, the divine righteousness and holiness are but imperfect in us, so we but taste, while here, only the first fruits of that joy which shall be fully revealed hereafter. However, as the righteousness of Christ is verily *begun* in sincere believers, so it follows that they also enjoy a *real* beginning and foretaste of divine joy and comfort; as those Christians can abundantly attest, that have learned religion by experience. John 16 : 22; 2 Cor. 1 : 5; Phil. 4 : 4. Whatever progress, therefore, any one makes in the love of God, be it more or less, so much of divine joy does he also perceive in his soul. And this holy and divine love, as it shall in the next life attain its full perfection, so in that day the Christian's *joy* (arising from love) shall also be *full*, as the Lord himself declares. John 15 : 11; 16 : 22. For divine love is the only true life, and the only true joy: but where this love of God is wanting, there is neither joy nor life; but death itself, and the everlasting portion of wicked men and devils. Whence has a father joy? Is it not from the love of his children? Whence has a bridegroom joy? Is it not from the love of the bride? Isaiah 61 : 10; 62 : 5. But infinitely sweeter must that joy be, which is derived from the love of our Creator! He not only embraces us as a father does his children, but he rejoices over us as over his bride; nay, most tenderly kisses us "with the kisses of his mouth" (Cant. 1 : 2.), (that is, in Christ, who is his mouth and word), and coming to us, through Christ with the Holy Ghost, makes his *abode* with us. John 14 : 23. Take heed, however, concerning this image of God, which consists in a conformity with God, that you do not therefore think, as if man were made *equal* with God in holiness. Not by any means. For God is infinite as to his essence, virtues, and properties; he is incomprehensible, and without bounds; so that nothing in the world can be compared with him. Man therefore, even in his first state, could not properly be said to bear God in him; being designed only to bear his *image*, as it has been already explained in Chapter I. of this Book.

9. That which has now been stated concerning the image of God, is plain, true, and beyond all doubt. It cannot be denied, that God created man, to be a bright mirror of himself: so that if man had been desirous to know the

nature of God, he might, by looking into himself, have beheld God there, as in a glass, and clearly perceived the image of the Deity within his own breast.

10. This image was the life and blessedness of man; but the devil, looking with envious eyes upon this image of God in man, exerted all his art and cunning to efface it, by raising in man a spirit of disobedience and enmity against God. Gen. 3 : 1, etc. This he accordingly effected with a subtility and haste, that never were since seen. He was not ignorant, that if man had continued in that state, *he* would have been the master: but that if he could be induced to fall from it, that the devil would thereby become the lord (or rather the tyrant) of fallen man. When, therefore, with all the powers of his cunning and malice, he could devise nothing more likely to accomplish his design than that by which he himself lost his first state or principality, he began, in a seductive manner, to insinuate into the imagination of the woman, no less than an affectation of the Divine Majesty. What can appear more divine, or what is there more noble to be wished for, than to "be as God"? Gen. 3 : 5. By this cunningly contrived method, man being therefore circumvented, he lost the divine image at once; and the image of Satan, consisting in an affectation of the Divine Majesty, was impressed upon him.

11. This aspiring thought, by which man threw off all his dependence on God, being thus begotten in the mind; and this haughty arrogance having once seized the imagination, there followed immediately apostasy from God, disobedience, and transgression of the commandment concerning the forbidden tree. Hereupon the image of God was extinguished, the Holy Spirit departed from man, and the image of Satan was imprinted instead of that which was effaced. Hence now there are so many men, so many slaves of the devil. The devil having thus gained his object in subjecting man to his dominion, most cruelly tyrannized over him; just as a giant may be supposed to do over a little infant. Hence the understanding in man is darkened and blinded; the will is, by a complete disobedience, turned from God; and all the springs and powers of the heart are stirred up against God in utter malice. In a word, the whole image of God lieth now slain in man, and the whole race of mankind, being swayed by the satanical nature, have a seed sown in them full of the deepest malignity. Hence men became the offspring of Satan, and his living likeness, being poisoned with all manner of sin and enmity against God. Thus died man! Thus died he the death everlasting! For as the image of God is the life and salvation of man, so the departure of this image is the death of man, even death eternal, and his damnation, which is also called a death "in trespasses and sins." Eph. 2 : 1; Col. 2 : 13.

12. They best understand this death, who, having been cast into deep spiritual temptations, sensibly feel the devil's rage and tyranny over them. By this he torments the soul beyond what it is in the ordinary power of sin to effect. Now, unless the Holy Ghost shine in upon the soul under this terrible affliction, and by darting in some ray of his light comfort it; the devil slays the man with this death, and racks the soul with the very anguish of hell itself. Hence all the natural force of the body sinks, the strength fails, the heart withers and pants, and

the very marrow in the bones consumes away, so that there is no soundness left in the body. This state is described at large, in Psalms 6 and 38. The word of God itself, to such a one, seems dead and lifeless: he finds in it no manner of devotion, no savor of spiritual life. This is the *spiritual* death, into which the soul is fallen: and while the soul remains thus spiritually dead, all human holiness, righteousness, excellency, might, power, glory, honor, arts, and wisdom, can avail nothing. And, truly, man would undoubtedly perish in this grievous condition, if he were not supported by divine grace: for nothing but this is able to succor him.

13. Learn, therefore, O man, duly to look into, and rightly to consider the abominable filthiness of *Original Sin*, as the sink of all abomination. For by this the hereditary righteousness of God was lost, and the hereditary unrighteousness of the devil transplanted into men. Hence the sinner was cast away from God, and doomed to an eternal death: and this he must certainly undergo, except he obtain forgiveness of sin for Christ's sake through faith.

14. But to set the state of fallen man, both as to soul and body, in as clear a light as possibly I can, I think it well to give a fuller description thereof in this place; most earnestly entreating every one, for the sake of God and of his own eternal salvation, to ponder again and again, and seriously to revolve in his mind that original depravity which has corrupted our nature. The consequence of this will be, that as a man beholds his bodily face in a glass, and knows it, so he may also behold in himself his own wretchedness, and original sin. This will daily influence him to lament his own distressed condition, and to sigh after Him, who alone is able to heal us.

15. For the whole Christian life is indeed nothing else, than a constant wrestling with original sin, and a continual purging away of the same by the aid of the Holy Ghost, and by true repentance. For, in proportion as any one mortifies his natural propensity to evil, in that degree is he renewed after the image of God, even day by day; and they who are not inwardly mortified by the Holy Ghost, are at best no more than hypocrites, let them make ever so great a show with an external profession of the Christian faith. Neither can they expect to enter into the kingdom of God, since they are not renewed into his image: for whatsoever is not dead to itself, nor renewed into the image of God by his Spirit, is altogether unfit for that glorious state.

16. From all this, there may evidently be inferred the absolute necessity of the new birth, and of the daily renovation of our mind into the image of God. This necessity will yet more fully appear, when we consider the image of the devil according as the law describes it. For as the devil not only does not *love* God, but rather *hates* him with his whole heart; so he has infected man's soul with the same contagion, and transfused into it malice against God; so that now man by nature neither loves, honors, believes, calls upon, nor trusts in God; but as he is filled with enmity against him, so he flees from him, and shuns him. As the devil is hurried on with a blind fury, and lives without God and his will; so in like manner, the soul of man being corrupted by him, leads a *godless* life, unmindful of God and of his will. This inward darkness of the

mind, is attended with a frightful destruction of the divine light and image; and brings forth that abominable sin, in which man, left to himself, saith: "There is no God." Ps. 14:1. And by reason of this blindness of heart, all mankind are become an abomination before God, in all their ways.

17. But notwithstanding so dreadful a night of apostasy, there still remains a spark of natural light in man's understanding, by which he might come to know that there is a God (Rom. 1:20); as also, that this God must be just, according as all the heathen philosophers teach: but as for the spiritual life, which is after God and his righteousness, it was wholly extinguished in man. For conscience, which is the law of God written in every man's heart when it was first formed by him, teaches every one what is good and right. Thus if you look, for instance, upon a person that is unchaste, there is not one that so much wallows in the filth of the flesh, but he now and then thinks with himself, "Surely there is a God, and this God is most pure and undefiled; and so not like to me by any means." He cannot but reflect further: "This holy and pure God, must abhor every sort of pollution and uncleanness; and, therefore, if I would be acceptable to him, I ought to live chastely, and to abstain from all impurity." But this spark of light is soon put out by the filthy lusts of the flesh which crowd in upon the mind; these overwhelm all good impressions, just as a spark of fire is swallowed up by a flood of water. The lust of the flesh is kept within the heart, and the conviction, which began to reprove it, is soon stifled.

18. From this it plainly appears, that the spiritual life, consisting in holy love and truth, is in the carnal or natural man utterly abolished. And thus the wiser sort of heathens, however they might sometimes by the light of nature maintain both the being of a God, and his providence over human affairs, were soon carried away with the darkness of their own hearts, and again called in question that providence which they had before asserted: so that very little is to be made of what they say on this head. This their books sufficiently declare. From this hereditary blindness of heart, and this natural inbred darkness, spring unbelief and doubts. And because all men are by nature in this degenerate state, they are an abomination in the sight of God; since there is no faith in them, nor any filial reliance upon the paternal goodness of God. To this spiritual life, and to the various operations that proceed from it, the natural man is an utter stranger; consequently he does not call upon God, but trusts to his own wisdom, power, and strength. This is the greatest blindness and darkness of mind possible.

19. From this blindness of heart, further arise both a contempt of God, and a state of carnal security. As the devil does not humble himself before God, but is hardened in pride; so has he infected the soul of man with the same vice, and poisoned it with contempt of God, security, and presumption. Hence he, like his father the devil (John 8:44), will not humble himself before God; but is stout and insolent, haughty and self-willed, and would do everything after his own will, without the least fear of the Lord to keep him awe. As the devil relies on his own strength and wisdom, and thereby entirely governs himself; so

fallen man, being infected with the contagion of Satan, acts in conformity with him; and will always be his own counsellor and master. Moreover, as the devil seeks his own honor, so does the natural man, who bears his image. He is in pursuit of self-honor, without any regard to his Maker, whose honor he was designed to promote. As the devil blasphemes the name of God, and is ungrateful to his Creator; so it is with man, transformed into his image. As the devil is unmerciful, wrathful, and revengeful, so is the soul of man, which he has soured with the same leaven of malice. As the devil delights to *lord* it over men, and to please himself with vainglory, so man, tainted with the same tyrannical ambition, haughtily lifts himself up above others. He laughs at his neighbor, and shuns his company, as if he were a worthless, pitiful person, and too great a sinner to be conversed with. But, O man! thou art to consider over and over again, that in these, and all other cases, the method of God is not to charge or accuse the outward members of a man, but the *heart* only. The heart is the murderer and the liar, not the hand nor the mouth. It is the soul that is guilty; and this is therefore everywhere arraigned in Scripture. So when God commands men to call upon him in the time of trouble (Ps. 50 : 15), he gives this command to the soul, not to the lips. And it is the very same in every other case. Whosoever does not observe this necessary rule in reading the Scriptures, is blind indeed. He can never have a right apprehension of original sin, repentance, or regeneration: nay, he cannot attain to a sound knowledge of any one article of the Christian religion.

20. We have daily before our eyes the extreme wickedness of men, their horrid pride, savage hatred, barbarous enviousness, and other impious qualities, with which they tear one another, after the manner of wild beasts. Many are transported to such a degree of malice, as to be unconcerned about their own lives, provided they can but hurt or destroy another. Their neighbor must submit to their pleasure, or expect to have a snare laid for his ruin. Thus, as the devil himself is a "murderer from the beginning" (John 8 : 44); so he stirs up the soul of man to thirst after the blood of others. For all these inhuman qualities of the heart, this envy and wrath, this bitterness of mind, this rancor and malice, what are they but the seed of the devil sown in man, and his express image engraven upon the soul? Alas! how the devil has portrayed himself in man!

21. God had implanted in man a conjugal affection, that was pure and honorable; that thence children might be begotten after the divine image. Nor could there have been a love more holy and heavenly, than that by which man, in his blessed estate, would have thus propagated the image of God and mankind at the same time. All would have been for the glory of his Creator, and the salvation of man. Nay, if man in the state of innocency could have begotten a vast multitude of children, and have thus propagated the honor and image of God; nothing, certainly, could have been more grateful to him than this; nothing more delightful, more full of holy joy and satisfaction. For these acts would then have proceeded from pure love to God and to men, as so many images of the Supreme Good. As God found in the creation of man, a holy pleasure, and delighted in him, as in his image; so also man would, in like

manner, have been sensible of a most pure and exquisite joy in the procreation of his like, for it would have been the propagation of God's image. But, alas! Satan has polluted this chaste flame of conjugal love with all uncleanness. Men and women, actuated with a blind transport of lust, beget children *in their own*, not in God's likeness. Gen. 5 : 3. How is the holy bond of matrimony trampled upon and profaned! How wholly defiled is it with spots of the flesh, and what a multitude of vices and impurities now shelter themselves under the sacred name of matrimony!

22. As God is just, the devil is unjust. The devil is therefore a thief, a plunderer; and being so in himself, has instilled into man's soul the same unjust disposition, the same ravenous nature. The devil is a false accuser (Rev. 12 : 10), a fallacious reasoner (2 Cor. 11 : 3), and a treacherous informer (Job 1 : 9, 10), as well as a scornful mocker of God and man. Job 2 : 3, 4, 5. He misrepresents both words and actions, and wrests them to a wrong sense. Of this artful contrivance he gave a striking instance when he beguiled our first parents by his craft and subtlety. Gen. 3 : 5–7. Thus the soul of man, corrupted by Satan, has received from him, as by inheritance, a perverse and lying nature. John 8 : 44. This poison, conveyed into the soul, is so horrible and so manifold, as to render it altogether impossible to declare at large the subtile contrivances, and the different kinds of diabolical art and cunning that proceed from it. Eph. 6 : 11. Read Psalm 5 : 9, Romans 3 : 13, and James 3 : 5, 6; and thou shalt find described therein in the most lively terms, that world of wickedness, which by a deceitful tongue is drawn forth from the diabolical venom that lurks within, and that thence spreads itself through the whole man. For God does not blame the tongue, or the hands alone, but in his law, charges the fault upon the whole man, yea, upon the heart, as the chief cause of all the evils committed. See the Commandments, in Exodus 20 : 16, 17. This ought to be particularly observed in the whole course of a religious life.

23. And this is that image of the devil, which now, instead of the image of God, is so deeply engraven on the soul. Hereby man is made to delight in sinning, and in slandering another, even as the devil's name imports. Rev. 12 : 10. How many, alas! are there, that reckon themselves very good Christians, and yet will not hesitate to slander their neighbor upon any occasion that offers; and after they have discharged their venom against him, will applaud themselves for what they have done. Such a man will say: "This is just what I have sought for a long while; I am now eased of a great burden; I seem to be alive again, as I have so finely treated such a one." Ah! poor man, thou art to be pitied! How great is thy blindness, that thou dost not discern who it is that has transformed thee into such a devil and slanderer; and whose image it is thou carriest about thee! Seest thou not that this is the very nature of the devil, the unhappy seed of Satan? Discernest thou not this to be his true temper, which he has implanted in the soul of man, that it might there display itself, in all sorts of vices, but more particularly in pride, covetousness, lust, and slander; even as daily experience abundantly witnesses? Alas, is this thy wit, and cunning, and wisdom?

24. Behold, O man! the foul, the

horrible, the profound corruption of Original Sin! O how filthy, how unsearchable it is! Consider this again and again; and descending into thyself, learn there to know the image and nature of Satan, which, like a gangrene, is spread through thy whole soul, together with all the dangerous symptoms that attend it. And learn how thy soul is hence become an abomination before God, and is laid waste in so dreadful a manner, that no creature is able thoroughly to search out the malignity of the heart of man. Neither art thou thyself able sufficiently to explore it, or to explain in words, that detestable venom which is as rottenness in thy innermost parts. Wherefore, I earnestly beseech and entreat every one, that he ponder with himself, and seriously reflect on those things that have been said concerning the *depravity and corruption of man's heart;* even as if they had been inculcated a thousand and thousand times, over and over again. For so great is this virulence, so malignant and pestilential, as to put it beyond the power of any creature, either angel or man, ever to root it out, or to cleanse or free our nature from it. All the powers of men come short of so great a performance. For how should any one be able to work out his salvation with his own natural powers, since they all without exception are utterly depraved, and dead to spiritual things? Man, therefore, must be forever miserable, and eternally lost in this corruption, unless there come to his help one that is able to succor, and to apply a healing medicine to so dreadful a disease. This must be a lord over sin and death, able to subdue so obstinate an evil, and by his divine virtue, to renew, transform, and purify again the defiled nature of man. All this is a convincing proof, that *justification* cannot be the work of man, but is the work of God only; and likewise that *regeneration*, or the being born again by the Spirit, is indispensably needful to the restoring of fallen nature. For in conformity to the inward principle of corruption, there is now a sort of necessity that the soul should live a perverse and impious life. Man does not now hesitate openly to transgress all the commandments of God; and this is enmity against God. The understanding and will are now so dead, and so much enslaved by sin, that according to their natural bent, they are incapable of any love, fear, or reverence for God. They cannot call upon him, honor him, praise, or worship him; they cannot put the least trust in him, or turn themselves towards him. Many of the heathens have, indeed, been illustrious for their good and virtuous deeds, and gained no small credit by their morality. But it is utterly impossible for nature to *change the heart*, to turn it to God, and to cleanse it from those sinful affections that lurk within. This work is to be accomplished only by a *divine* power. For notwithstanding all this glittering show of morality which some make, there still remains the inward root of the tree of evil, whose fibres stick so fast in the soul, that no human power can ever destroy them. The utmost that a man can do in so sad a case, is to prevent the fire from breaking out into flames, so as to consume all that comes near it; but notwithstanding this damp which is cast upon it, the evil fire still keeps in, and secretly burns as much as ever.

25. Were not human life, and the management of civil and social affairs under some check, the whole race of

mankind would be destroyed at once, and rooted up from off the face of the earth. But though the devil has exercised an exceedingly great cruelty over man, yet God has not suffered him to pluck up all the natural powers and affections from man's soul, or to extinguish the spark of free will which remains in the soul. There still remain the law of nature and the natural love subsisting betwixt husband and wife, parents and children. Without this it would have been impossible for mankind to have long subsisted upon earth. For he who obeys the unbridled lusts and desires of his corrupt nature, must be looked upon as the very bane of all society. He entirely ruins, as much as in him lies, all commerce and dealings betwixt men. It is, therefore, an effect both of God's mercy and wisdom, that he has preserved in fallen man this little flame of natural love: the design of which is, that by the sense of this love, we might know in some degree the excellency of that spiritual and divine love which we have lost by the fall of man; and that from feeling the one, we might be brought to consider the worth of the other, and to breathe after the recovery of the same. But as to *spiritual* matters, and such things as more immediately concern the happiness of the soul, and the kingdom of God, nothing can be more true than that saying of the apostle, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." 1 Cor. 2 : 14. That is, man in his natural state, has not so much as one spark of spiritual and divine light; but is wholly blind in the things that appertain to the heavenly life, and that constitute the image of God in the new creature. Man, nevertheless, was created for this only end, that by means of this spiritual light, he might, with the inward eye of the soul, contemplate the gracious presence of God, and his sincere love towards him; and, continually walking with and before the Lord, absolutely depend upon Him, and submit himself to be governed by His will and pleasure.

26. The natural man not having so much as one spark left of this spiritual light, it cannot but be that all men must abide in their natural blindness, unless they be enlightened by God himself. This is that hereditary spiritual blindness, which utterly incapacitates us for the knowledge of such concerns as relate to the kingdom of God. But if it happen, as too often it does, that a man besides this, indulge in evil practices, then that spiritual blindness is followed still by another, even natural blindness, which produces mournful effects in the fallen soul. For by so prevailing a wickedness, that weak glimmering light which yet sparkles in man, and would reason him into *outward* honesty of life, is at last totally extinguished; and the soul is struck with utter blindness and darkness of heart, and must forever continue so, unless Christ enlightens it.

27. What art thou, then, O man, unless Christ by his Spirit regenerate thee, make thee a new creature, and transform thee into the image of God? This new creation, necessary as it is, is, however, only *begun* in this life, and must struggle under the weight of many infirmities. If thou dost but look into thyself, even after thou art become a new creature through the Holy Ghost, it will plainly appear that the image of God is but slightly

delineated, and, as it were, shadowed out in thee. Dost thou not see, that faith, hope, charity, and the fear of the Lord, are as yet but weak, and hardly able to advance beyond the first principles of the Christian life? Dost thou not see how slender thy humility is, and how deeply the sin of distrust, pride, and impatience, is rooted in thy breast? Dost thou not find thy devotion weak and languid; and thy charity towards thy neighbor comparatively cold? How tender a spark of pure chastity remains in the heart; and how vast a fire of carnal desire burns within! How faint the one, how violent the other! How great still are thy self-love, self-honor, and interest, sins that lurk within, and do not always outwardly appear! And how fierce is the tide of evil concupiscence which flows in upon thee, and disturbs thy inward repose! Whence it follows, that to the very last moment of our lives, we must, by the Spirit of God, continually wrestle with the old Adam, and with the image of Satan. All this urges us incessantly to pray, sigh, and seek, till the Divine Spirit be bestowed upon us, in order to destroy the image of Satan daily, and to restore the image of God to us.

28. From all this, thou canst easily understand, O man! that thou art never to rely on thine own strength; but entirely to cleave to the grace of God, which alone is able to work all this in thy soul. All things are to be sought and obtained from and by Christ through faith. From Him thou art to receive divine knowledge and wisdom, against thy own blindness; his righteousness, against all thy unrighteousness; his holiness against all thy impurity; a full redemption, power, and victory, against death, hell, and the devil. From Christ thou must obtain remission of all thy sins, against the kingdom of sin and Satan, and against all the combined powers thereof; and, lastly, everlasting happiness, against all spiritual and bodily adversities and troubles. In this order, life eternal is to be derived from Christ. But of this, more shall be said in the Second Book of this volume.

CHAPTER XLII.

IN THIS CONCLUDING CHAPTER THE REASONS FOR ADOPTING THE METHOD OBSERVED IN BOOK I. ARE EXPLAINED; THE DUTY OF GUARDING AGAINST SPIRITUAL PRIDE IS DESCRIBED, AND THE TRUTH IS SET FORTH THAT TRUE SPIRITUAL GIFTS CANNOT BE OBTAINED WITHOUT PRAYER.

What hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?—1 COR. 4:7.

I REGARD it as necessary, before I conclude this Book, to call the reader's attention to several points.

2. In this Book, *repentance and its fruits*, have, for various reasons, been explained at large, and in different ways. Most of the Chapters in this Book, accordingly, treat upon the fruits of true repentance; such as our renovation in Christ, the daily morti-

fication of the flesh, the practice of self-denial, contempt of the world, the exercise of charity, etc. For therein we find the beginning and foundation of true Christianity, of a holy life, and of salvation itself, through true faith. So, too, no solid comfort can ever be tasted in the heart of man, unless he be thoroughly acquainted with the nature of Original Sin, that dreadful, mortal, and diabolical evil, which is like an infernal poison (ah, it is impossible sufficiently to describe and deplore it!) and has proved the seed of a multitude of fatal and pernicious fruits. All the books of comfort, and all the promises with which the Gospel abounds, afford no substantial consolation to a man, except he be first thoroughly humbled by a sense of his misery, and of that awful evil, Original Sin. Man, in this fallen state, is too apt to flatter himself, and to look for comfort, before a thorough search has been made into his own sinful condition, degeneracy, and apostasy from God. Nature is concerned for comfort more than for a cure.

3. But this is very preposterous, and altogether against the tenor of Scripture, and the method of salvation therein explained. Our Lord says, "The whole need not a physician, but they that are sick." Matt. 9 : 12. No cure can be expected, no medicine can be prescribed, no comfort can be applied, nor can Christ himself, the great Physician of souls, be of any benefit at all, so long as a man, thinking himself well, is not sensible of those deep distempers that rage in his soul. Hence a true Christian's life consists in a *daily crucifixion* of the flesh, and of all its sinful propensities. O that every one might lay this earnestly to heart! No man can belong to Christ, or have a share in his merits, but he that regulates his life according to this rule. Now, such a soul shall not be left comfortless in the end; but, shall be refreshed with divine consolation. No sooner is a soul thoroughly humbled by a lively sense of inbred corruption, and the infectious influence it hath on all the actions, than it is raised again by those suitable grounds of comfort which the Gospel affords. In all this, the operation of the Divine Spirit, and man's meditation on the word of promise, concur, and bring over the soul to Christ, who is both willing and able to heal her, and to turn her mourning into permanent gladness. He who will enter upon this course of true and sincere repentance, must be careful, at the same time, not to be shaken by the foolish judgment which this impious world will be apt to pass upon the whole design of true Christianity. Let the profane worldling think ever so much of his own natural parts and wisdom, it is certain that he is altogether blind in the things of the Spirit of God, and most ignorant. And though he may exercise his reasoning faculty on things that are far above his reach and capacity, yet while he has no knowledge of the wretchedness of his own nature, and of those spiritual diseases that spring from it, he continues an utter stranger to spiritual concerns. He does not understand what Adam and Christ are, or how Adam is to die, and Christ to live in us again. And as he disdains to learn what he knows not, he must forever remain in darkness and ignorance. Nor will he ever be able in that state to obtain any insight into the grounds and properties of true repentance, faith in Christ, and the new birth, wherein true Christianity consists, and whereby he might be rescued from everlasting ruin.

4. The next thing which I would mention at the close of this Book, and which thou art carefully to avoid, is the sin of *spiritual pride*, after God has begun to implant in thee, by his grace, spiritual gifts, new virtues, new habits of mind, and new knowledge. See that thou ascribe these attainments not to thy own power, wisdom, or industry, but to the grace of God. Carefully avoid taking up thy rest in those virtues and good dispositions that are formed within thee; and never confide in them as *means* of thy justification before God. For as they are yet marked by various defects and imperfections, so they can never pass for the perfect righteousness of God. Never seek thy own honor and glory by the gifts which God has been pleased to bestow upon thee. On the contrary, use them with humility and fear, divesting thyself of all selfish designs, and returning all thou hast unto Him, who is the true Disposer and Author thereof. Do not say in thy heart: "I have now a strong faith, fervent charity, much knowledge, many gifts;" for these suggestions are the *tares*, which the enemy of thy soul sows among the wheat while thou sleepest.

For, (*a*) none of these gifts are thine, but God's only, without whose illumination and all-quickening power, thou art but a lifeless lump of clay. These gifts are no more thine, than the light and heat of the sun are the earth's, which is warmed and penetrated by them. Thou art, at the best, but the casket to hold the jewels; and the glory of these no more belongs to thee, than the lustre of a precious stone belongs to the box in which it is kept. Is it not, therefore, great folly to boast of the goods of another, which are laid up in thee?

(*b*) Thou art to consider, that, as the lord of a treasure may lodge his treasure wherever he pleases, and remove it as he thinks fit; so God, in like manner, may deposit his heavenly treasure in thee, and take it away again, as he sees proper. Him, therefore, thou oughtest to fear with holy reverence, and at the same time carefully beware of spiritual pride and presumption: for this would issue in the inevitable loss of the celestial jewel committed to thy trust. "Be not high-minded, but fear." Rom. 11 : 20.

(*c*) Thou art, further, to consider, that the righteous God will call thee to an exact account of all he has intrusted to thy care. The more thou hast received, the more will he require at thy hands.

(*d*) In the midst of all thy gifts, do not think that thou hast received all that the Lord has in store for his children. Ah! beloved Christian! be thy attainments ever so high and excellent, they are hardly the beginning; there is yet much which thou lackest.

(*e*) Seriously consider, that no good and perfect gifts are obtained or preserved except by *prayer:* for every good and perfect gift descendeth from God. James 1 : 17. Whatever thou seemest to possess without this, is but a lifeless shadow, a seed bearing no fruit, but withering away. For without prayer, no heavenly gift can descend into the heart of man. The reader is desired to peruse what is said on the subject of Prayer in the *Second* Book of this Work. There are two things which thou must chiefly regard in thy prayers and application to the Lord: *first*, That the *Image of Satan be destroyed in thee;* as unbelief, pride, covetousness, lust, wrath, etc.; *secondly*, That the *Image of God be re-*

stored in thee; in which are contained faith, love, hope, humility, patience, meekness, and the fear of the Lord. These two, that is, the destruction of the satanic, and the restoration of the divine image, are illustrated in the Lord's Prayer. This prayer makes both *against* thee, and *for* thee. If the name of God alone is to be hallowed, then thy name must be debased and thy haughtiness be pulled down. If the kingdom of God shall come, then certainly the devil's kingdom must be overthrown in thee. If thou desirest that the will of God should be done, then truly thine own must be renounced.

These are the two parts into which any useful prayer-book or method of prayer may be fitly digested; an order which is clearly exhibited in the prayer of our Lord, so far as it respects those heavenly and eternal benefits and gifts which we are directed to seek. Nay, in the Lord's Prayer, all the treasures both for soul and body, and all the things which we need both for this life and that which is to come, are summed up. And there is no question, but that the Father in heaven, according to his paternal compassion, will readily grant, what the Son of his love has so strongly commanded us to ask.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND BOOK.

AS in nature, my dear Christian reader, the destruction of one thing is the production of another; even so is it in a true Christian life. The old, carnal man must be destroyed and pass away, that so the new spiritual man may be produced in his place. And as our carnal life is directly contrary to the holy life of Christ (which in the preceding Book is sufficiently declared); it is absolutely needful that we renounce this carnal life, before we can attain the spiritual life of Christ, or follow him in those steps which he has been pleased to leave us. Thus, for instance, thou must put an end to thy pride, before thou canst be truly humble; thou must cease from wrath, before thou canst possess the virtue of meekness. And this is the reason why the spiritual Christian's life ought to proceed from true *repentance.* This is also the design and substance of the preceding Book, as plainly appears both from the order in which the chapters are arranged, and from the *Conclusion* appended to the whole Book.

2. Since, however, there will be occasion to treat of the doctrine of repentance in some chapters of this Second Book, I shall now give some account of the whole method into which this Book is digested. As the main design of the First Book was to lay open the nature of Original Sin, and the deadly influence which it has upon all our actions; so it is but fit that the Second Book should begin with JESUS CHRIST, that everlasting well-spring of man's salvation, in whom alone we find help and a remedy against the destructive poison of Original Sin, and against that flood of calamities and miseries which thence proceeds. All this on man's side, is effected by FAITH, apprehending that salvation which is merited by Christ. This matter is explained in the first three chapters of this Book. As, however, that *faith* which leads the soul to this fountain, and draws thence effects so excellent and good, also brings forth living and sound *fruits;* the next three chapters (IV–VI), are spent in describing the same more at large. But, even as the fruits of righteousness and of the Spirit are to grow up in us and wax strong, so must the fruits of the flesh, in proportion, decay and decrease. And this is the daily, effectual, and unfeigned repentance, wherein a Christian ought constantly to be employed, if ever the flesh be mortified, and the Spirit be restored to dominion. It was, therefore, judged expedient, to give here a clear description of the difference betwixt the flesh and the Spirit, and of the properties of a daily repentance. Here consult Chapters VII–X. But inasmuch as from this habitual repentance, and the mortification of the *old* man (the life of a true Christian being nothing else but a constant crucifixion of the flesh), the *new* man is daily to come forth, it is impossible to find a more perfect pattern, than that which our

Lord Jesus Christ himself has left us. And for this reason, the life of Christ ought to be a mirror unto us, in which to view ourselves and him; and by beholding him, to embrace the more freely his poverty and reproach, his contempt and sorrow, his cross and passion, his agony and death. And this holy life of Christ is the death of the flesh, and is accompanied with the exercise of prayer, love, and humility. This is set forth at large in Chapters XI–XXV.

3. Thus are the humility and lowliness of Christ a true ladder of ascension for a penitent soul; by means of which we ascend into the heart of God, as of a loving Father, and calmly repose in his paternal affection. It is the *human* nature of Christ with which we begin our spiritual life, and rising up higher and higher, arrive at last at his *divine* nature. It is then that we contemplate in Christ the heart of our Father in heaven. It is then that we behold him as the sublime, the everlasting, essential, and infinite Good; we behold him as the immeasurable omnipotence, as the unfathomable mercy, the unsearchable wisdom, the purest holiness, the unspotted and endless righteousness, the most perfect goodness, the noblest beauty, the most perfect graciousness, and, at last, as the most joyful salvation. These points, as they chiefly make up Christian contemplation, so they are explained in Chapters XXVI–XXXIII. But because no one can ever arrive at this state without prayer, hence the ensuing ten Chapters (XXXIV–XLIII), treat upon the nature of *prayer*, and the exercise of divine *praise*. And since this life, grounded on maxims of sound and unfeigned religion, will soon be attended with *crosses* and *tribulations*, there follow fifteen Chapters (XLIV–LVIII), wherein are considered the *cross* of Christians, and the virtue of *patience*, the practice of which is thereby exceedingly promoted. To all this, something is added of the nature and conquest of those deep *spiritual temptations*, with which Satan harasses those that adhere to the Lord, and who endeavor to be faithful to the end.

God grant that we may all be true followers of Christ, not ashamed of his holy life; but follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth, and be led at last to the living fountains of waters, where the Lord will wipe away all tears from our eyes! Amen.

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BOOK II.

CHAPTER I.

JESUS CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD, IS GIVEN TO US BY OUR HEAVENLY FATHER AS OUR HELP AGAINST THE DAMNABLE AND DEADLY POISON OF ORIGINAL SIN, AND THE PERNICIOUS FRUITS THEREOF, AS WELL AS A PROTECTOR AGAINST ALL THE CALAMITIES AND EVILS BOTH OF THE BODY AND THE SOUL.

With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.—Isa. 12 : 3.

AS our distemper is exceedingly great, mortal, damnable, and out of the power of any creature to remove; therefore it is needful that we should have a remedy proportioned to the disease; a high, a divine, an everlasting, remedy and help, entirely derived from the pure mercy of God. As our original disease was caused by the wrath, hatred, and envy of the devil (Gen. 3 : 1): so God, in tender compassion, was moved to heal the mortal wound of our sin by his infinite mercy. And as Satan had used his utmost endeavors and subtlety, in order to infect, slay, and condemn us, God was pleased, in his infinite wisdom, to give us his beloved Son, in order to restore us to that life, happiness, and salvation which we had lost. Hence he has made the precious blood of Christ to be the grand restorative of our nature, and the cleanser from all the contagion of sin. He hath given us his quickening flesh, to be our bread of life; his holy wounds, as a sovereign balsam to heal our wounded condition; and his precious death, to be an abolition of our death, both temporal and eternal. 1 John 1 : 7; Acts 20 : 28; John 6 : 32, etc.; Isa. 53 : 5; 25 : 8.

2. But so disabled, so weak, and undone, is fallen man, that he cannot so much as apply this precious medicine even when it is freely offered: so little health, so much weakness is there in him. Nay, we even, by nature, strive against our cure, and reject the remedy which should help us.—Wherefore, O Lord, unless thou shouldst draw me after thee (Cant. 1 : 4), and, as a faithful physician, administer to me what thou hast ordered, the best prescriptions will avail me nothing. Take me, therefore, entirely into thine own hands, and trust me not to myself. If I be left to myself, the eternal ruin of my soul will be my lot. Therefore "turn thou me, and I shall be turned: heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; for thou art my praise." Jer. 31 : 18; 17 : 14. As long as thou keepest back thy mercy, and hidest thy face from my sorrow, I shall remain in a diseased condition. Ps. 30 : 3. Whilst thou forbearest to quicken me, I am tied down by the chains of death. Therefore I cry with David, "I am poor and needy; make haste unto me, O God. Thou art my help, and my deliverer; O Lord, make no tarrying." Ps. 70 : 5.

3. O blessed Lord! shall not thy mercy be strong enough to raise a

sick soul from her languishing illness? a soul that is not able to raise herself? Wilt thou not condescend to come to me, since it is not possible that I should come to thee? Didst thou not love me, even before I had so much as a thought of loving thee again? Thy mercy is so prevailing and so strong, that it has even overcome thyself. Was it not mercy that nailed thee to the cross, and gave thee up to death? What is so strong as to encounter and conquer thee, if it be not the strength of thy own mercy? What has might sufficient to apprehend thee, and to bind and conduct thee to death, but thy love only, wherewith thou hast loved and quickened us, when we were dead in trespasses and sins? Eph. 2 : 1. For thou wouldst thyself undergo the pangs of death, rather than suffer us to be forever bound over to death and eternal damnation!

4. Thy mercy, O Lord, has made thee all our own, and put a title to all thy merits into our hands. When thou becamest a tender infant, it was wholly for our sakes, unto whom thou art "born a child." Isa. 9 : 6. When thou wast made an offering for our sins, and when thou wast slain as an innocent lamb on the cross, it was to give up thyself unto us, and freely to impart unto us all things beside. O excellent gift of God! a good wholly appropriated to us, even our own peculiar good and treasure!

(*a*) Behold! beloved Christian, the wisdom of God! God has by means of this everlasting good made himself our own property, that he might thereby in return make us *his own*. For having purchased us "with a price," we are no longer our own, but his who hath bought us. 1 Cor. 6 : 19, 20. For whosoever receives so excellent a gift, receives also the Giver himself, from whom it proceeds. And again, whosoever possesses any good as his own, he makes it his own to all intents and purposes, and to the best advantage he can. Thus, likewise, is Christ become thy own and proper good. Thou canst apply him in such a manner, as to obtain by him everlasting life and salvation.

(*b*) Christ is become the true medicine of thy soul, to restore thee—thy meat and thy drink, to refresh thee—thy fountain of life, to quench thy thirst—thy light, in darkness—thy joy, in sadness—thine advocate, against thy accusers—wisdom, against thy folly—righteousness, against thy sin—sanctification, against thy unworthiness—redemption, against thy bondage—the mercy-seat, against the judgment-seat—the throne of grace, against thy condemnation—thy absolution, against thy fearful sentence—thy peace and rest, against an evil conscience—thy victory, against all thine enemies—thy champion, against all thy persecutors—the bridegroom of thy soul, against all rivals—thy mediator, against the wrath of God—thy propitiation, against all thy trespasses—thy strength, against thy weakness—thy way, against thy wandering—thy truth, against lying and vanity—thy life, against death. He is thy counsel, when thou hast none to advise thee—thy power, in the midst of thine infirmities—thy Everlasting Father, when thou art forsaken and fatherless—thy Prince of Peace, against the adversary—thy ransom, against thy debt—thy crown of glory, against thy reproach—thy teacher, against thy ignorance—thy Judge, against thy oppressor—thy King, to destroy the kingdom of Satan—thine everlasting High Priest, to intercede for thee.

5. (*a*) Consider now, O Christian, what an excellent gift the Lord JESUS CHRIST is. Let it be thy daily prayer and supplication to make a true saving use of all those heavenly benefits, and to improve all the *offices* of Christ to the end for which they are designed. If he be thy Medicine (Matt. 9 : 12), fear not but thou shalt be healed: since he is thy Bread (John 6 : 51), thy soul shall be filled. Is he to thee a Fountain of Life (Isai. 12 : 3), then truly thou shalt thirst no more. Is he to thee a Light (John 8 : 12), then thou shalt remain no longer in darkness. Is he thy Joy (Luke 2 : 10), what then shall afflict thee? Is he the Advocate (1 John 2 : 1) that pleads thy cause, what adversary shall cast thee? Is he thy Truth, who shall deceive thee? Is he thy Way, who shall make thee to err? Is he thy Life (John 14 : 6), who shall slay thee? Is he thy Wisdom, who shall seduce thee? Is he thy Righteousness, who shall condemn thee? Is he thy Sanctification, who shall reject thee? Is he thy Redemption, who shall imprison thee? 1 Cor. 1 : 30. Is he thy Peace (Eph. 2 : 14), who can disturb thee? Is he thy Mercy-Seat (Rom. 3 : 25), who can arraign thee? Is he thy Throne of Grace (Heb. 4 : 16), who can give sentence against thee? Is he thy Discharge and Absolution (Colos. 2 : 14), who then dares impeach thee? Is he the Champion and the Captain of thy Salvation (Heb. 2 : 10), who shall be able to stand against thee? Is he thy Bridegroom (John 3 : 29), who then shall snatch thee from him? Is he thy Ransom (1 Tim. 2 : 6), who will arrest thee? Is he thy Crown of Glory (Heb. 2 : 7), who then shall reproach thee? Is he thy Master (John 13 : 13), and Teacher, who then shall correct thee? If he be thy Judge (2 Thess. 1 : 9), who shall oppress thee? If he be thy Propitiation (1 John 2 : 2), who shall accuse thee? If he be thy Mediator (1 Tim. 2 : 5), who shall set God against thee? If he be thy Advocate (1 John 2 : 1), who shall prosecute thee? Is he thy Immanuel (Isai. 7 : 14), who shall be against thee? Is he thy King (John 12 : 15), who shall expel thee out of his kingdom? Is he thy High Priest (Heb. 7 : 25), who can refuse his intercession and sacrifice? Is he thy Saviour (Matt. 1 : 21), who shall destroy thee?

(*b*) How canst thou have a more excellent, a more valuable present? It is a present of greater worth than thou thyself, than all mankind, and all the world besides. It is a present that infinitely surpasses all the sins, miseries, and calamities of the whole world. Christ hereby is all our own, both as to his divine and his human nature. It was by sin we had forfeited the richest of all treasures, the Sovereign Good, even God himself: and it is by Christ, that all is made up again, and God himself given to us as our property. And for this reason, Christ is called Immanuel (Isai. 7 : 14), (which being interpreted is, *God with us*), that in him we might have both a God and a Brother.

6. (*a*) Consider now, O Christian! what an immense, what an infinite good thou hast in Christ thy Redeemer, and to what spiritual benefits thou art entitled by him. If people were but better acquainted with the sources of this heavenly comfort, then no cross, no affliction, would seem any longer insupportable to them; because Christ would be all in all, and by his presence alleviate the miseries of this life. Christ himself is ours not only as a crucified Christ, but also as he is glorified, together with all the majesty

that resides in him. "All things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." 1 Cor. 3 : 21–23.

(*b*) Alas! poor, miserable, accursed, and condemned sinners, that we by nature all are! How came we to be favored and honored with so high and inestimable a gift? For thou, O Lord Jesus, art to us—Jehovah our Righteousness—a Mediator between God and man—our everlasting Priest—the Christ of God—a Lamb without spot—our propitiatory oblation—the fulfilment of the law—the Desire of the patriarchs—the Inspirer of the prophets—the Master of the apostles—the teacher of the evangelists—the light of the confessors—the crown of the martyrs—the Praise of all the saints—the resurrection of the dead—the first-born from the dead—the glory of the blessed—the consolation of the mourners—the righteousness of sinners—the hope of the afflicted—the refuge of the miserable—the entertainer of strangers—the fellow-traveller of pilgrims—the way of them that were mistaken—the help to them who were forsaken—the strength of the weak—the health of the sick—the protector of the simple—the reward of the just—the flaming fire of charity—the Author of faith—the anchor of hope—the flower of humility—the rose of meekness—the root of all the virtues—the exemplar of patience—the enkindler of devotion—the incense of prayer—the tree of health—the fountain of blessedness—the bread of life—the Head of the church—the bridegroom of the soul—the precious pearl—the rock of salvation—the living stone—the heir of all things—the redemption of the world—the triumphant Conqueror of Hell—the Prince of Peace—the mighty lion of Judah—the father of the world to come—the guide to our heavenly country—the sun of righteousness—the morning star—the inextinguishable light of the celestial Jerusalem—the brightness of the everlasting glory—the unspotted mirror—the splendor of the divine majesty—the image of the paternal goodness—the treasure of wisdom—the abyss of eternity—the beginning without beginning—the word upholding all things—the life quickening all things—the light enlightening all things—the truth judging all things—the counsel moderating all things—the rule directing all things—the love sustaining all things—the whole comprehension of all that is good.

(*c*) This is the great and infinite gift, which God has so freely bestowed upon mortal men.

CHAPTER II.

THE MANNER IN WHICH THE CHRISTIAN SHOULD APPLY AND APPROPRIATE TO HIMSELF THE CONSOLATION NOTICED IN CHAPTER I.

The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.—LUKE 19 : 10.

THE *first* or chief foundation on which the Christian depends, when he derives consolation from the doctrines of the remission of sin, and of the merit of Christ, consists in the *universal* extent of the divine *promises;* of which that mentioned above is not the least considerable. For if Christ came to save those that are lost, who can possibly doubt, that he will also seek and save *thee,* since thou art of the number of the lost. It is also said, that God, "commandeth all men everywhere to repent; because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness." Acts 17 : 30, 31. This argument is full of consolation. As if the apostle had said, Christ will judge the world; and *therefore* God commandeth *all* to repent, that all may escape the dreadful sentence of eternal damnation. This is confirmed by St. Peter, who tells us, that God "is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." 2 Peter 3 : 9. All which passages plainly assert the universal grace of God, extending itself to *all* men.

2. The *second* foundation is the divine *oath.* In order that no room might be left to doubts and scruples in this grand article, God has confirmed the universal promise of grace with an *oath.* "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that he turn from his way and live: none of the sins that he hath committed, shall be mentioned unto him." Ezek. 33 : 11, 16. As if he had said, How can I delight in the death of a sinner, who am Life itself? Let but the wicked be converted, and he shall certainly live.—Behold! God desires sinners to be converted! And dost thou doubt, that thou, who art a sinner, art by God solicited to conversion? When the apostle explains this oath, he says, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." 1 Tim. 1 : 15. But if Christ came into the world with an intent to save sinners, thou art undoubtedly one of the number of those whom he came to save.

3. In order to show that the Lord will not retain the remembrance of sin, he hath no less than three times engaged his word. First, by the prophet Isaiah, "I, even I," says he, "am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for my own sake, and will not remember thy sins." Isa. 43 : 25. Secondly, by Jeremiah he hath thus expressed his mind: "This shall be the covenant: I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." Jer. 31 : 33, 34. And, thirdly, by the prophet Ezekiel, "If the wicked," says he, "will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, he shall surely live, he shall not die. All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him." Ezek. 18 : 21, 22. This is the

divine act of oblivion, solemnly declared in favor of all returning sinners, without exception.

4. Now the cause or reason why God promises that he will not remember sin any more, is no other than the all-sufficient satisfaction and reconciliation wrought by Christ. For whatever is entirely paid, yea, over and above paid, should be altogether buried in an everlasting oblivion. Now, God being once perfectly reconciled and satisfied by the most holy and most complete sacrifice of Jesus Christ, he can no longer be angry, nor perpetuate the remembrance of our transgressions.

5. The same oath is repeated in the prophet Isaiah, "Look unto me," says the Lord, "and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: I have sworn by myself; the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return." Isa. 45 : 22, 23. Which oath, the Epistle to the Hebrews explains in this manner: "Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast." Heb. 6 : 17–19. That is, God, by his counsel and promise, having confirmed them with an oath, hath more than sufficiently sealed and established his gracious will; that so none might be discouraged.

6. The *third* foundation is the eternal covenant of grace, which consists in the pardon of sin: "This shall be the covenant: I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." Jer. 31 : 33, 34. And this covenant or testament, because confirmed by the death of Christ, is therefore everlasting. To the same purpose the Lord says by the prophet: "Neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord, that hath mercy on thee." Isa. 54 : 10. And again, "I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David" (*i. e.*, Christ). Isa. 55 : 3. And Moses declares the same: "The Lord thy God is a merciful God: he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he sware unto them." Deut. 4 : 31. And again we read: "He will ever be mindful of his covenant." Ps. 111 : 5. On which eternal covenant, that we might the more firmly rely, he hath renewed and established it with every one by Holy Baptism, which therefore is called "The answer (or covenant) of a good conscience towards God." 1 Peter 3 : 21. For this end, Christ himself was baptized in Jordan, and thereby entered with us into this covenant. Matt. 3 : 13.

7. The *fourth* foundation is the death of Christ, by which the covenant or testament of God was ratified. But if any ask, For whom did he die? St. Paul answers, that "he died for ALL." 2 Cor. 5 : 14, 15. And St. John says, "He is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world." 1 John 2 : 2. So John the Baptist said: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." John 1 : 29. This, the apostle explains in the following comforting manner: "As by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon ALL men unto justification of life" (Rom. 5 : 18): where a compari-

son is made betwixt Christ and Adam. As if he had said, 'Since the offence of Adam hath been so strong, as to make all men sinners; shall not the righteousness of Christ be far more powerful to make them righteous? If sin hath abounded, shall not grace much more abound?' The same apostle, having occasion to show that the merit of Christ is universal, and extends itself to all, thus reasons: "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all." But if this be true, it also follows, "that God will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." 1 Tim. 2:4–6. On all this Paul remarks, that God, by "Christ hath reconciled all things to himself, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven." Col. 1:20. And again: "God spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us ALL." Rom. 8:32. In this number, reckon also thyself, because "God is no respecter of persons." Acts 10:34. Since, therefore, Christ died for sinners, thou, who acknowledgest thyself to be one, must necessarily have an interest in his death, and in all the benefits purchased by it.

8. The *fifth* foundation is the universal call, grounded upon the universal merit of Christ. The latter was exhibited for the sins of the whole world, and it was proper that it should be preached to all creatures. Matt. 9:13. Now since Christ declares: "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Mark 16:15), it follows, that thou also, because thou art a sinner, art called. But called to what? To repentance. And why? That thou mayest obtain remission of sin, through faith. "It behooved," says the Lord, "that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in the name of Christ among all nations." Luke 24:46, 47. And the apostle affirms, that "the gospel was preached to every creature which is under heaven." Col. 1:23. But to what end did God cause it to be preached? Surely for no other end than that thereby faith might be kindled and established among men, according to that saying of the same apostle: "How shall they call on him, in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him, of whom they have not heard?" Rom. 10:14. Whenever, therefore, God calls us to repentance, far be it from us to think that God calls us in vain, or without a real design to save us. Surely God does not deceive us: but in this serious affair he seriously calls upon us, that we may embrace his mercy, and accept the offer of grace. Hence he is also angry with those who make light of his supper, and disdain to come to his feast. Matt. 22:7. Whereas, to those who obey his call, through faith, he hath given his promise, full of heavenly comfort that "whosoever believeth in him, shall not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16. Nay, he hath graciously promised to preserve the same faith unto the end, even till the salvation of the soul, which is the end of faith, be secured. Phil. 1:6; 1 Pet. 1:9.

9. The *sixth* foundation is the inward testimony of the divine Spirit in us, who seeks after righteousness, and seals us unto the day of redemption. Rom. 8:16; Eph. 4:30. This Spirit incessantly rouses and awakens the conscience. He reproves without intermission, convinces of sins, and sets them before thine eyes. He summons thee to repentance, calls thee inwardly in thy heart, strives with thee, and

leaves nothing untried, in order to keep thee from every sin, and lead to thy conversion. John 16 : 8. These things thou canst not conceal, though ever so desirous to do it. This witness of Christ in thee, is never silent: and though thou shouldst stop thine ears against him, yet shalt thou be compelled to hear him *inwardly*. And if thou shouldst desire to reject his summons, yet must thou feel the internal energy of his correction. All this is a convincing, strong, and unquestionable proof, that "God would have thee to be saved."

10. The *seventh* foundation consists of the examples of sinners, whom God, upon their conversion, hath received into favor. Surely "there is none righteous," of himself, "no, not one." Rom. 3 : 10, 23. Not only David, Manasseh (2 Chron. 33 : 11–13), Peter, Paul, Mary Magdalene, and Zaccheus; but "ALL of us are sinners, and come short of the glory of God." There is none innocent in his sight. Whatever favor God shows to one, the same he offers to all the rest; since he "is no respecter of persons." Acts 10: 34. We all are saved by grace, without any merit of our own, and all stand in need of a gracious pardon of sin: for, "if thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?" (Ps. 130 : 3), and if thou enterest into judgment, "in thy sight shall no man living be justified." Ps. 143 : 2.

11. The *eighth* foundation is, that the merit of Christ is not only sufficient, but even more than sufficient for the sins of all men, how numerous, great and heinous soever they may be. Why then shouldst thou exclude thyself, and refuse to share in the benefits of the ransom which Christ paid? Is it not infinitely greater than the sins of the whole world? For as thou art of the race of men, so thou canst apply to thyself that word of the Lord, "The Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them" (Luke 9 : 56): and that of St. Paul, "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself" (2 Cor. 5 : 19): and again, that of St. John, "He is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world" (1 John 2 : 2); that is, for all the sins of every man in particular.

12. A *ninth* foundation is this, that the merit of Christ is an *infinite* satisfaction, beyond all number, measure, and end; and it is so on account of the exalted Person that suffered, who is both God and man. Why shouldst thou then limit the extent, number, measure, and bounds of merit so ample, and exclude thyself from it? So great, so high, and so extensive are the power and efficacy of that merit, that it would still prove a sufficient ransom if every man were guilty of the sins of the whole world. Nay, if there were as many worlds drowned in sin, as there are men that live on this earth, yet would the merit of Christ and his righteousness be large enough to cover all their sins. Cast not therefore away a mercy so universal, so full and every way abounding. This surely is that "depth of the sea, into which God hath cast all our sins." Mic. 7 : 19. Hence the Psalmist says: "As the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy towards them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us." Ps. 103 : 11, 12. This is that "eternal redemption which is obtained for us." Heb. 9 : 12. The benefit of this complete redemption, is summed up by St. Paul: "It is God that justi-

fieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died," etc. Rom. 8: 33, 34.

13. The *tenth* foundation is this, that the obedience of Christ is perfect: because he fulfilled the will and law of his Father in all things, thereby to give satisfaction for all the disobedience which all the men in the world had committed against God's law. For if the sin and transgression of any one man were not expiated by him, then surely, his obedience would not prove perfect, and the disobedience of Adam would be more effectual to condemnation, than the obedience of Christ to justification. This cannot be, since the apostle in plain terms affirms the contrary, in Rom. 5 : 18. What reason is there then, that any one should exclude himself from this perfect obedience, or be backward to assert his own interest in it? Let us rather consider, that Christ for this very end humbled himself, "and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phil. 2: 8), "that he might redeem them that were under the law." Gal. 4 : 5. In the number of these, we all surely are comprised. For, as our first parents aspired after and affected the majesty of God, so it behooved Christ, the repairer of our breaches, by a most profound humility, to atone for this heinous offence, and to be "made a curse for us" (Gal. 3:13), in order that the blessing might come upon all, who were cursed in Adam.

14. The *eleventh* foundation is, that since the royal victory and triumph of Christ surpass all the multitude, weight, and heinousness of sin, together with all the power of death, hell, and Satan, what cause canst thou assign, O sinner, why the same victorious Christ should not triumph over *thy* sin as well as over all the rest? What! canst thou believe that *thy* transgressions *alone* are more powerful than Christ, the omnipotent king? When he shall make all his enemies his footstool (Ps. 110 : 1), cannot he subdue under him also thy sins? Dost thou think that *thy* crimes only shall prove too hard for him? God forbid, therefore, that thou shouldest call in question thy interest in so universal a conquest, in so glorious a triumph.

15. The *twelfth* foundation is the everlasting priesthood of Christ. Ps. 110 : 4; Heb. 4 : 14. He freely grants pardon to all them that ask it; and gives the Holy Spirit to those that earnestly pray for that gift. Nor will he, or can he refuse to any what belongs to his office (Heb. 5 : 6; 7 : 17); for he is the Saviour of the world, and the High Priest and Mediator between God and man. 1 Tim. 2 : 5. If he refuse his office to any one that implores it, he would verily cease to be a Mediator. But so far is he from this, that he freely offers to sinners the benefit of his mediatorial office. "Come unto me," saith he, "all ye that labor and are heavy laden." Matt. 11 : 28. And again: "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters" (Isa. 55 : 1) of life. And does he not by his apostles and messengers, seriously invite us to be reconciled to God (2 Cor. 5 : 20), and at the same time offer us his help and assistance for that end? He seeks the lost sheep (Ezek. 34 : 16), and receives into favor the Prodigal son as soon as he returns. Luke 15 : 20. Take heed, therefore, O man, that thou reject not the office of Christ, the Mediator, and that thou deprive not thyself of the benefit of a sacerdotal intercessor, every way full of divine consolation and comfort.

CHAPTER III.

OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS BEFORE GOD, CONSISTS SOLELY IN THE PERFECT OBEDIENCE AND MERIT OF CHRIST JESUS, AND IN THE REMISSION OF SIN APPREHENDED BY FAITH.

As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.—Rom. 5 : 19.

AS a skilful builder, when he is about to raise a lofty structure, takes care to lay first a deep and solid foundation, so the merciful and compassionate God, when he was to erect the high and everlasting palace of our salvation and righteousness, thought fit to lay the foundation thereof, in the depth of his mercy, upon the Person and office of his dear Son Christ Jesus, as on the true rock of salvation. This is the promise recorded by the prophet: "Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste." Isa. 28 : 16. This stone was indicated by Christ, when he declared to Peter, that "thereon he would build his church;" a church so firmly and surely sustained, that "the very gates of hell should not prevail against it." Matt. 16 : 18.

2. This was the rock and corner-stone, which was preached by the apostles Peter and Paul. 1 Pet. 2 : 4; 2 Tim. 2 : 19. This is that marvellous corner-stone celebrated by the Psalmist, and upon which the 118th Psalm is grounded. Upon this foundation, God has been pleased to raise the whole structure of our righteousness, faith, and eternal salvation. But as God, our merciful Heavenly Father, has, on his side, placed the groundwork of our salvation and righteousness in the unsearchable depth of his mercy and everlasting love; nay, even in his beloved Son, and the paternal affection of his own heart; so he wills that on our side also the same be laid in the depth of our heart, and in the centre of our soul; in order that, through the divine light and power of faith alone (and even faith is solely the work of the Divine Spirit), the righteousness of Christ may be apprehended, and without any respect of our own works, whether antecedent or consequent, be freely imputed and appropriated to us. The reasons of this way of proceeding are as follows.

3. In the *first* place, that God by this means might cleanse and justify a man from within, and in the inmost centre of his soul: for as man is inwardly corrupted by Satan, and infected in all the interior powers of his soul, so it is but fit that his cure should be wrought from within, and that all the faculties of his soul should be restored to their former integrity and soundness.

4. *Secondly*, that our righteousness proceeds from *faith* only. This faith is wrought by God himself, and it stands entirely in his *power* (1 Cor. 2 : 5), being supported by it, and not by any human performance, or hypocritical action of men. Of this latter sort was the righteousness of the Pharisees (Matt. 5 : 20), who made in-

deed a show of outward performances, but were little concerned about the reformation of the heart, and the inward recesses of the mind.

5. *Thirdly*, that our heart, soul, and spirit, renouncing human power and strength (upon which, through the temptation of the Devil, and the snares of self-love, ambition, and pride, they too much rely), might wholly depend upon *Christ alone*, and upon his precious merit and satisfaction. For from him alone flow the gracious remission of all our sins, and the whole train of graces consequent on it; Jesus Christ having abundantly satisfied for the sins of the whole world, and reconciled the Father to mankind.

6. *Fourthly*, that the righteousness of Christ, by faith, might be made *our* own. In order to the same end he also by his Word and Spirit begets this faith in our hearts, that thereby we may become actually possessed of this inestimable treasure. For this is the highest, the unspeakable, and inconceivably great consolation, that our righteousness is not the righteousness of a man, nor even of a saint or angel, but of Christ, and of God himself; "It is God that justifieth." Rom. 8:33. Therefore if the whole world were overflowed with the sins of one man, yet would the righteousness of Christ be still more extensive and overflowing. For verily, he is "the Lord our Righteousness" (Jer. 33:16), and how can sin be more powerful than the Lord Jehovah? Would it be an insufficient satisfaction, thinkest thou, if instead of a penny which thou owest thy creditor, thou shouldest return ten thousand pounds? But such a price, nay, one infinitely greater, is paid with the blood of Christ, which therefore is called by St. Paul, "God's own blood." Acts 20:28. So great and immense is the righteousness of Christ, conferred on us by faith, that thereby we are not only made *righteous*, but also *righteousness* itself. 2 Cor. 5:21. For, as it is not enough that a defiled infant be washed from its uncleanness, but it must also be wrapped up in clean apparel (Ezek. 6:10), so Christ not only cleanses us with his blood, but clothes us also with the garment of salvation, and covers us with the robe of righteousness (Isa. 61:10): which we have received from the hand of the Lord. This garment is called by the prophet, priestly or holy apparel; by David, "the beauty of holiness" (Ps. 29:2); by St. John, "fine linen clean and white, which is the righteousness of saints" (Rev. 19:8); by the prophet Amos, "rivers of righteousness" (Amos 5:24); by St. Paul, "superabounding grace" (Rom. 5:20); and "exceeding riches of grace." Eph. 2:7. All these expressions set forth that the righteousness bestowed on a penitent soul, is as great as God himself, and therefore beyond all human comprehension. Though in the state of innocency, our first parents had a complete righteousness in its kind, yet was it not so full and exuberant as that which we have obtained in Christ: for this righteousness and holiness, which we apply to ourselves by faith, is far more excellent than that which Adam would have left us, had he continued in his original innocency. So, too, the humility and obedience of Christ, as it was more perfect, so it was more acceptable to God, than the obedience and innocency of Adam; nay, a thousand such persons as Adam, could not have come up to the perfection of Christ alone. Adam would have transmitted to us indeed an hereditary righteousness, and thereby united us

with God; yet it cannot be denied, that our union, established with God in Christ, is much more noble and excellent than that which we should have derived from Adam: for Christ being made man, has in himself so cleansed and exalted human nature, that the primitive state of Adam is not at all to be compared with it. And as Christ retains his human nature to all eternity; so all believers continue in the same united to God; because Christ is wholly ours, and we are wholly his. Whatever purity the human nature hath obtained in general in His Person, is also transferred to the nature of each believer in particular. This will appear in the glorification of our bodies at the last day, when "they shall be fashioned like unto the glorious body of Christ." Phil. 3:21. Nay, even in this life, it is said in faith: "Behold, thou art fair, my love" (Cant. 1:15); "glorious, not having spot or wrinkle" (Eph. 5:27): "the king's daughter is all glorious within, her clothing is of wrought gold." Ps. 45:13. In a word, our righteousness in Christ is no less immense than God himself; and if his depth may be found out, so will our righteousness. Whence all creatures, finding nothing that can be reproved in man, must stand as it were astonished, and cry out with admiration: "Who is he that shall accuse or condemn man, whose righteousness is the Son of God himself?" And this is that righteousness of faith on which we rest, as on an eternal rock, and which is a foundation that cannot be shaken. Of this we glory, in this we rejoice in time and in eternity. By this we are conquerors, and triumph over sin, death, the devil, and hell. By this we tread upon the lion and adder, and trample under foot the young lion and the dragon. Ps. 91:13.

7. *Fifthly*, an angel (who never died for us) cannot be the foundation of our righteousness, much less any *man*. The righteousness of man is but weak and inconstant; and if he should fall, "all his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned" (Ezek. 18:24; 33:13), and therefore whatever is built thereon falls soon to the ground and comes to nothing. For this reason, our righteousness must have another foundation; a foundation, namely, which is firm and constant, and not liable to be shattered to pieces, though the "mountains should depart, and the hills be removed." Isa. 54:10. "An everlasting righteousness must be brought in" (Dan. 9:24), so that "the salvation of the Lord may be forever, and his righteousness be not abolished." Isa. 51:6. A most excellent, eternal, and sovereign Person, must procure an eternal and infinite good, by an immense and infinite satisfaction offered for us.

8. The *sixth* cause why God will have our righteousness to be apprehended by faith, is found in his truth and promise, on which our faith entirely rests, and by which God declared and promised righteousness to Abraham, and to all his faithful seed. Whence St. Paul argues, that "our righteousness must be of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end that the promise might be sure." Rom. 4:16. Upon this promise of grace, fulfilled in Christ, has God established our righteousness and salvation, as the same apostle in another place more fully asserts: "Even as Abraham," says he, "believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Know ye therefore that they

which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham." And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham: saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed (Gen. 12 : 3). "So then they which be of faith, are blessed with faithful Abraham." Gal. 3 : 6–9. And thus "grace and truth are come by Jesus Christ." John 1 : 17.

9. *Seventhly*, God has made his grace, and the merit of Christ, the foundation of our righteousness, that Christ alone may have the honor of it. Isa. 45 : 22–24; 53 : 11. "In him alone is our help." Hos. 13 : 9. He is the beginning, middle, and end of our righteousness and salvation, so that "every mouth may be stopped." Rom. 3 : 19. For we are "saved by grace through faith; not of works, lest any man should boast." Eph. 2 : 8, 9. But if our righteousness were founded on our own works and merits, there would then be no room for grace, nor should we have occasion for mercy or pardon of sin, "for which every one that is godly doth pray." Ps. 32 : 6. Moreover, there would be no place for humility, nor for the fear of God; neither would faith and prayer turn to any great account; yea, we should have no need of a Mediator, Redeemer, and Saviour. Christ would have then died in vain; and we should be obliged, both by an external and an internal obedience, perfectly to fulfil the whole law. We should remain under the curse, have fallen from grace, and have lost Christ; as St. Paul expressly testifies in Gal. 5 : 3, 4. So that the doctrine of justification by *works*, in the sight of God, is altogether inconsistent with the whole Scripture, both of the Old Testament and the New, and with our holy Christian faith.

10. In short, our salvation and righteousness are founded entirely upon the eternal grace of God, and the eternal Person and office of Christ; and in Christ alone we are made righteous, holy, alive, blessed, sons and heirs of God. The righteousness of Christ is ours, his goodness ours, his holiness ours; his life ours, his happiness ours, and lastly, the sonship and inheritance of Christ are ours; and so the WHOLE Christ, both according to his divine and his human nature, is ours; (for God gives us the WHOLE CHRIST for a Saviour, that he with his Person, office, grace, glory, and blessedness, may be wholly appropriated to us). That all this is our own, is our highest consolation, glory, praise, honor, love, joy, and peace before God and all the angels and elect; it is our sublimest wisdom, strength, might, victory, and triumph over sin and death, the devil and hell, the world and all our enemies. For which God be praised to all eternity! Amen.

CHAPTER IV.

SHOWING THAT SAVING FAITH IN THE TRUE CHRISTIAN PRODUCES MANIFOLD FRUITS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND THAT THESE MUST PROCEED FROM THE DEPTH OF THE HEART; ALSO, THAT THE CHARACTER OF OUR OUTWARD WORKS, DEPENDS, IN THE JUDGMENT OF GOD, UPON THE STATE OF THE HEART.

And this I pray, that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ: being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God. —Phil. 1 : 9–11.

THE true Christian is not only justified by faith in Christ, but is also made a temple and habitation of Christ and of the Holy Spirit. To this end the good Spirit of God purifies his heart by faith: and it is fit that Christ should live in his temple, together with his love, humility and meekness. 1 Cor. 6 : 19; Eph. 3 : 17; Acts 15 : 9. To this end also thy Redeemer has bestowed upon thee his Holy Spirit, that he might create in thee a new heart, and endue thee with so cheerful and ready a mind, as to do the will of God freely, without any unwillingness or compulsion. Jer. 31 : 32, 33; Heb. 10 : 16. This new and holy obedience proceeds not from the law, or any legal commandment; but from a lively faith. Hence, "the law is not made for a righteous man" (1 Tim. 1 : 9), to *compel* him to do good; though it is in other respects an excellent rule by which to regulate a Christian's life and manners. For a true and living faith does everything freely and of its own accord: it renews the man, it purifies the heart, it produces fervent love to our neighbor, it hopes and considers such things as are not yet seen. Faith prays, praises, fears, and confesses God. It is also patient, humble, merciful, loving, meek, easy to be reconciled, compassionate, and peaceful. Faith readily forgives offences; hungers and thirsts after righteousness; embraces God with all his grace, and Christ with all his merit; and obtains a complete remission of all sins. Now if any one does not perceive in his heart these fruits of the Spirit, and the indwelling of Christ by faith, let him humbly entreat the Lord, and that with tears and groans, that he may obtain them. I would not be understood, however, as saying that a Christian in this life could attain to perfect and absolute holiness; for even the greatest saints are still sensible of their infirmities; of which the book of Psalms and the Lord's Prayer fully convince us. God therefore requires that our righteousness, by which we are to please him, should be entirely apprehended by faith; and lest we should act the hypocrite he wills that his righteousness should be stamped on our very heart, and on the inmost centre of our souls; and likewise that all the fruits of faith and righteousnes should proceed from a living and sound principle seated within the mind. According to this inward and leading principle,

God judges all our works, whether they be true and genuine, or false and hypocritical.

2. Here again, we do not assert that perfection can be found in this present world, but only require that a Christian should walk in newness of life, and approve himself by such works as are cleared from guile and hypocrisy. For it is by no means possible that the fruits of the Spirit enumerated by St. Paul, in Gal. 5 : 22, 23, should not be found in that man in whom the Spirit of God himself dwells (Gal. 5 : 22); or that a good tree should not be known by its fruits, though they may not be altogether so perfect and angelic as could be wished, but be stained and often obscured by various frailties and imperfections. Nevertheless, all hypocrisy and insincerity, are utterly to be banished from a regenerate state; nor are the fruits of a Christian to proceed from an empty profession, or a lifeless appearance of things, but possess truth and reality. I do not deny, on the one hand, that the Christian Church may be fitly compared to a hospital crowded with all manner of sick; or to a house inhabited by sinners as well as by saints. I believe also that many, like feeble children, have not yet attained to the ability of walking alone; but that they gradually learn to walk steadily. Hence it is necessary to "bear one another's burdens" (Gal. 6 : 2), and never rashly to judge or condemn those who by reason of their weakness halt behind. Rom. 14 : 1. We ought rather to restore in the spirit of meekness those that stumble, and with great tenderness to rectify what is amiss in them. Thus we learn to read our own imperfections in the infirmities of our brother. But on the other hand, Christians ought to labor to make continual advances in the spiritual life. They ought not to continue always in a state of infancy and weakness, how difficult soever it be to conquer the carnal mind that obstructs our growth. They ought to be fervent in the practice of "charity, out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned" (1 Tim. 1 : 5); and bear this in perpetual remembrance, that all outward performances are valued by God according to the inward disposition of the heart. If the heart be good, thou mayest then be assured, that whatever thou doest is also good before God: but if the heart be evil, corrupt, and envious, then all thy works are evil and hateful. Such as thou art inwardly, and in thy heart, such art thou accounted to be before God; and such are thy prayers, thy public worship, thy giving of alms, thy receiving the Sacrament, and all thy other performances.

3. Whosoever therefore is willing to try his own faith and inward condition, should set before his eyes the Ten Commandments (as by Christ himself interpreted) (Matt. 5 and 6), and learn to judge of his actions by his heart. By such an impartial trial, he will clearly perceive whether what he does be acceptable or unacceptable to God, and whether he bring forth the genuine fruits of that inward righteousness which is by faith. Phil. 1 : 11. For example, thou considerest that thou dost not defile thyself with any external idolatry. Now, in keeping from idols thou doest surely well; but I would have thee farther inquire, whether thou also abhorrest all manner of *internal* idolatry? Or whether thou hast set up an inward idol in some secret corner of the heart, to which thou payest thy vows? Ezek.

14:3, 4. Examine thyself whether thou art *within*, what thou professest to be *without?* See whether thy heart be not set upon the world, upon avarice, and pride? If so, then thou art assuredly guilty of most dangerous idolatry; for the creature has engrossed those noble affections which should be entirely surrendered to the Creator, and dedicated to him alone. Thou assurest us that thou art punctual in saying thy prayers, and in praising God; and that thou dost not neglect to offer up thy thanks for benefits received at his hands; but didst thou ever consider, whether thou cursest in thy heart, whilst thou prayest with thy lips? Whether thou contradictest by thy actions what thou expressest in thy words? If so, thy prayer will prove but a worthless performance, and all thy thanks and praises will be trifling and vain. Thou tellest us how strictly thou keepest the sabbath-day. In this truly thou doest well; but look on the inward frame of thy soul. Dost thou celebrate the true sabbath in thy heart? Dost thou rest from evil thoughts and wicked desires? Is thy heart devoted to God, and freed from noise and clamor, that God himself may work in it? Thou attendest divine service at church; it is well done; but see that thou carry not with thee to church the canker-worm of pride and vanity. This would convert thy service into mere formality, and all thy performances into an empty show. Thou yieldest external obedience to God and to thy superiors; but does that which passes within thy soul agree with this exterior conduct? Is everything done with an upright and willing mind? Dost thou act from a principle of love, or of fear only? If it be fear that constrains thee to an external compliance, then know assuredly that thy obedience is no more than hypocrisy. Thou defilest not thy hands with blood and slaughter, and thinkest thyself free from the crime of murder. But take a view of thy heart: for when the heart burns with wrath and anger, and when this, as a flame, flashes out upon thy face; when thy inward wrath breaks out into reproaches and curses, saying to thy brother, *Raca*, and *Thou fool;* then surely thou art become guilty of the judgment, of the council, and of everlasting fire. Matt. 5:22. What therefore will it avail thee that thy hand is unpolluted with blood, whilst thy heart accuses thee of hatred and murder? 1 John 3:15. For within, in the heart, the murderer, the adulterer, the thief, and the liar, are harbored. Here it is that thou must look for the beast, the evil lust, and the root of all malice and mischief: which, if it be not destroyed by serious repentance, by true contrition and conversion, by faith and the blood of Christ, it is impossible that thou shouldest do so much as one work acceptable to God; who judges of all thy actions by the inward temper and disposition of the heart.

4. Of this Christ himself gives us an example from the commandment "Thou shalt not kill," saying, "If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother." Matt. 5:21–26. That is, it will not at all avail thee to pray, to sacrifice, to worship God, and to take the Sacrament; yea, all thy actions will be converted into so many sins, because God regards the heart only, and not the outward performance. Hence St. Paul commands us to "lift up holy

hands without wrath and doubting." 1 Tim. 2:8. And St. Peter enjoins married persons to beware of anger, and to dwell together in love and harmony, as heirs together of the grace of life, "that their prayers be not hindered." 1 Peter 3:7. Nay, the Lord Jesus himself strongly exhorts us to brotherly reconciliation, by the three following arguments. Matt. 5: 25, 26.

(*a*) The first is, "Agree with thine adversary quickly, while thou art in the way with him;" that is, whilst thou art on this side of eternity: for our life indeed is nothing else but a perpetual motion towards death and the grave. If in this life thou art not freed from the bonds of wrath, thou shalt remain a captive to them, yea, to the devil himself, throughout all eternity.

(*b*) The second argument is, "lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge." It is an awful thing to be summoned to the tribunal of God, and before so tremendous a judgment-seat, to plead our cause against an accusing adversary. Whereas, whatever is pardoned, settled, and forgiven in this life, the same will also be forgiven and eternally pardoned in the next. Whence we may gather how much God regards the love of our neighbor, since he will have it by no means separated from the love of himself; and therefore refuses to admit of our love to him, unless it be linked to that of our neighbor. And why? Because God is Love itself, and loveth man as his own soul.

(*c*) The third argument is, "lest thou be cast into prison, whence thou canst not come out till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing." It is agreeable to the divine justice, so to deal with us there, as we have dealt with our neighbor here; and "with that measure we have meted withal, to measure to us again." Luke 6:38. Wherefore if thou refusest to forgive any brother his faults, the judgment of God is this: That in like manner no sin shall be remitted to thee. This will prove a burden heavy indeed. For the man that dies in this bitter, irreconcilable temper, must, in hell, continue a debtor to all eternity, and this without any hope or prospect of ever lessening the debts which he has here contracted.

5. Thus the Son of God, has by this example, taught us that we must judge of the worth of our outward works, nay, of all our religion, by the inward disposition or principle that sways the heart. But perhaps thou still continuest to flatter thyself, and to say, "I am baptized into Christ; I have the pure word of God; I hear it; I receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper; I also believe and confess all the articles of the Christian faith: wherefore it cannot be, but that my life and actions must be pleasing to God; I am a Christian in truth, and in the right way to be saved." This, alas! is the general, but false reasoning of many in these days, who regard their outward performances as constituting true righteousness. It might do well enough, if the heart did but agree with their profession: for without this, all is mere trifling, and a dead, hypocritical show. Look therefore into this, and learn to judge of thyself by the inward frame of thy soul. Thou boastest indeed, that thou art a Christian; and an excellent name it is; but dost thou consider, whether thy heart and thy actions agree with a name so sacred? Hast thou received the unction from above, and art thou possessed of the fruits of the Spirit, that demonstrate a Christian? 1 John 2:

27. If these be wanting, thou wilt prove in the end but a false and spurious Christian. Thou assertest, further, that thou art baptized; and so indeed thou art! But search the state of thy heart, and inquire whether thou livest in the new birth, in daily repentance, and an unwearied mortification of the old man. See whether thou bringest forth fruit answerable to the baptismal covenant, in which thou art engaged? Thou sayest that thou hast the oracles of God committed to thee, and that thou hearest and readest them: but inspect thy heart, and consider whether the Word be converted into thy life and spirit, as bodily food passes into thy flesh and blood? Whether thou hast lived up to its direction, and expressed the effect of it in thy conduct? If thou contentest thyself with the bare *hearing* thereof, thou must know that this will never yield eternal salvation, and that thou deceivest thyself in a matter of infinite importance. For this reason has the Lord compared the kingdom of Heaven to leaven, which gradually spreads itself through the whole lump, and converts every part into its own nature; thereby to set forth that powerful influence which the Word ought to have upon our will and affections. Truly, "not every one that saith, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven; but he that doeth the will of the Father which is in heaven." Matt. 7:21. Thou thinkest that thou dost a service when with zeal thou defendest the purity of the doctrine: and truly therein thou doest well. Nevertheless, I would have thee inquire, whether by the purity of the doctrine, and thy defence of it, thou hast also attained a true purity of the *heart*. Do we not find many rigid defenders of the pure doctrine, who in their lives are the most unclean of men, full of pride, bitterness, and covetousness? Alas, the name of God itself, is made a common shelter for all manner of vices, which screen themselves under the same, with impunity. Thou affirmest that thou often receivest the Lord's Supper. This is right; but search thine own heart. Thou hast often received the flesh and blood of Christ in this Sacrament: why then do the flesh and blood of Adam live and reign in thee? Should not the life of Christ shine forth in thy whole conduct? Should not his love, his humility, and meekness, diffuse themselves through all thy manners? Where is the advantage, if thou receivest Christ in the Sacrament, and deniest him in thy life and actions? Thou sayest, that thou believest and confessest all the articles of the Christian faith. It is well! but have recourse to the touchstone of the *heart*. That is only a true faith, which unites man with God, and God with man; by which God dwells, lives, and operates in man. If these effects be wanting in thee, thy faith is false, and so far from uniting thee with God, it sets thee at a greater distance from him. This, however, is not to be understood of the faith of weak and feeble Christians, which is often so clouded, as to render it hard to perceive its life and motion. For even a weak *faith*, though it be like smoking flax, has in it the properties of a strong faith, though it cannot exert itself with equal strength and energy. It heartily cleaves to God, and brings forth fruit amidst all those infirmities with which it struggles. But I would have it understood of faith in general, and of the trial and fruits of it, that, if thou believest in Christ, then Christ must certainly live in thee by faith, or

thine will prove but an empty, naked profession. If thou believest that Christ suffered death for thy sins, thou must also die with him to the same (Gal. 2 : 20), and renounce the world, with all its pride and avarice. Rom. 6 : 2. If this effect do not follow, then truly thou believest not in Christ. If thou believest that Christ was crucified for the sins of the world, *thou* must with him be crucified to the same. If thou refusest to comply with this, thou canst not be a living member of Christ, nor be united with him by faith. If thou believest that Christ is risen from the dead, it is thy duty to rise spiritually with him, and firmly adhere to him, thy Head and Saviour. In a word, the birth, cross, passion, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ, must, after a spiritual manner, be transacted in thee. And this is the blessed effect of faith, and the influence it has on believing souls. Wherever this effect is wanting, there is nothing but a lifeless image of faith, with which men miserably deceive themselves. So if thou believest in the Holy Spirit, the same Spirit in whom thou believest, must of necessity dwell and reign in thy heart, and enlighten and sanctify it. For, "as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." Rom. 8 : 14.

6. Therefore, dear Christian! let not your religion be confined to bare externals, but see that it proceed from the more inward recesses of a heart endued with a true, living, and active faith, and with an unfeigned, inward, and daily repentance. If you put away from you this inward life, this faith, and this repentance, you strip your religion of all essential goodness, and, instead of a living principle, which ought to be established in the mind, you carry about an empty, insignificant name, which will avail you nothing in that day, wherein God will judge all things according to the inward frame of the heart. But if you are truly affected with a sense of your inward wants and impurities, then flee without delay to the healing fountain of grace! Draw and drink, pray and knock, seek and cry, "Lord, have mercy upon me!" Then your heart shall be cured, your sin covered, and your transgression cancelled.

CHAPTER V.

SHOWING THAT THE EVIDENCE OF TRUE CHRISTIANITY DOES NOT CONSIST IN THE KNOWLEDGE AND THE HEARING OF GOD'S WORD, BUT THAT HE IS A CHRISTIAN, IN WHOSE LIFE GOD'S WORD IS MANIFESTED, AND WHO BESEECHES GOD IN SINCERITY THAT THIS WORD, AS A DIVINE SEED, MAY BE QUICKENED IN HIM, AND BEAR FRUIT.

The gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.—ROM. 1 : 16.

THE way by which we are to arrive at true and substantial wisdom, and become friends of God, is to submit ourselves to the discipline of repentance, and to lead a life conformable to the Word of God. Such a life as this cannot fail to be attended with true illumination of the mind,

and an increase of all divine graces; nay, with so close an alliance with God himself, as to make us "partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." 2 Peter 1 : 4. An example of this we have in Enoch, who having "walked with God, was not, for God took him" to himself. Gen. 5 : 24. To such a holy life as this David aspired with the utmost fervor of spirit, proposing two means by which to obtain it: the first, *fervent prayer;* and the second, a *diligent practice of the word of God.* "I cried," says he, "with my whole heart; hear me, O Lord: I will keep thy statutes. I cried unto thee; save me, and I shall keep thy testimonies." Ps. 119 : 145, 146.

2. These words set forth the difficulties which he encounters who seeks to be a true Christian, and to keep the word of God in holiness of life. For flesh and blood naturally strive against the word of God, and that holiness of life which it requires: and are, besides, inconstant and weak, and prone to yield to the enticements of the world. The devil on all occasions hinders our progress, and opposes our endeavors on every side. This is followed by a multitude of evil examples, and the persecutions which wicked men raise in opposition to those souls that enter upon another course of life. Against obstinate evils, such as these, all the strength of the soul is to be opposed. This we learn from the example of David, who cried unto the Lord *with his whole heart*, in order that he might better digest the Word, and by leading such a life as that Word requires, continue in the favor of God. This ought also to be our main concern; the favor of God being infinitely preferable to all that the world affords. Whoever pleases God, and is His friend, most effectually secures himself thereby from the malice of all his enemies. Hence *serious and fervent prayer* is, as I said before, the first step to a holy life. The second means to obtain a holy life, is expressed in the following words of the same Psalm: "I prevented the dawning of the morning, and cried: I hoped in thy word. Mine eyes prevent the night watches, that I might meditate in thy word." Ps. 119 : 147, 148. Here the Psalmist declares the earnest study, love, and affection, which are due to the word of God; as also the time best suited for meditating in it, namely, the morning. The faculties of the mind are then more strong and vigorous than at other times; and are best disposed for searching into divine subjects. The truth of this is at that season most feelingly perceived, when the soul, afflicted by sadness and deep spiritual temptations, "watches for the morning" (Ps. 130 : 6), and with "waking eyes" (Ps. 77 : 4), expects help from the Lord. She is then "as a sparrow alone upon the house top," as a lonely owl in the desert (Ps. 102 : 6, 7); and "so weary with groaning" (Ps. 6 : 6), as to be almost ready to expire.

3. This is that exercise of the cross, or school of affliction, in which all saints are most effectually trained for a happy eternity. Whoever is not inured to this sort of trials, can know but little of God and of his word. In this exercise, all the natural powers of soul and life consume away, that God alone may become our strength and support. By such inward trials as these, the carnal life is likewise more and more weakened, and the quickening power of God and of his word, perceived with the greater effect and experience. And truly, all

our efforts ought to centre in this, that the external hearing and reading of the divine word be practically applied to the mind, and improved into Christian experience.

4. This doctrine, therefore, I would have firmly rooted in thy mind, namely, that not the reading or hearing, but the doing and practising of the word, demonstrates the true Christian. James 1 : 22. Without this practical improvement, hearing and reading will be of no great advantage. For the word was not committed to us, that it might be read and known only, but that it might be reduced to practice. As a medicine gives no relief to the patient who hears of, or looks upon it, but at the same time refuses to take it; so the word, though a remedy for our diseased nature, can yet cure no man, or restore him from death to life, whilst he refuses to take what the word prescribes. Therefore, in order to this, fervent and constant prayer (according to the example set us by David), will be requisite in order to enable us to conform our life and actions to the divine word. What advantage is it to an artist that he knows an art, if he never practises it? Will not his supine and careless neglect reduce him at length to poverty? And what will it avail us to *know* the word of God, and not *do* it? "That servant," says our Saviour, "which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes." Luke 12 : 47. And St. Peter affirms, that "it had been better for such not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them." 2 Peter 2 : 21. As a father does not own him for a son, who in everything acts in a manner contrary to his will, so not words, but the life and actions, are marks and indications of a child of God, according to that saying of our Saviour: "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill me,—this did not Abraham.—Ye are of your father the devil." John 8 : 39, 40, 44. Why should a barren and fruitless tree take up any room in the garden, when it only incumbers the ground on which it grows? It is surely fit for nothing, but to be cast into the fire, as is represented in the parable of the barren fig-tree. Luke 13 : 6, 7. As it would be foolish to give to a raven the name of a swan, to which it has no resemblance; so if the men of this world should be called by the name of true Christians, whilst so little of a Christian temper appears in their life and manners, I think it would be justly counted egregious folly. It is not by words, but by deeds and actions, that we are to judge of a Christian's state, according to that saying of St. Paul: "The kingdom of God is not in word, but in power." 1 Cor. 4 : 20. Such is the condition of most men at this day, that those who make the strongest pretences to the Christian name, do nothing but that which is contrary to the Christian spirit. They are like the people at Rome, concerning whom Laurentius Valla exclaimed when reading these words of our Lord, "Blessed are the merciful, blessed are the peacemakers," etc. (Matt. 5 : 7–9), "*Surely either these words are not true, or we are no Christians.*" Man is corrupted to such a degree, that even not a few brute creatures visibly surpass him in some good quality. The dove excels him in harmlessness (Matt. 10 : 16); the ant in industry (Prov. 6 : 6); the stork in

a careful provision for her young; the dog in love and fidelity; the ox and the ass in knowledge of their master (Isa. 1 : 3); the sheep in meekness (Isa. 53 : 7); the lion in generosity and clemency towards weak animals; the cock in watchfulness; and the serpent in wisdom. On the contrary, man in his natural state exceeds all the beasts in mischief. He is more fierce than a wolf; more crafty than a fox; more vain than a peacock; more voracious than a swine; more pestilent than a viper; fiercer than a bear. Indeed, the Lord Jesus himself terms Herod a *fox* (Luke 13 : 32); John the Baptist applies the name of *vipers* to the Pharisees (Matt. 3 : 7); and St. Paul that of *lion* to Nero. 2 Tim. 4 : 17. Truly, those vices and mischiefs, which go single and unaccompanied in brutes, are oftentimes crowded together in one natural man. So that the human body is very significantly called by the apostle, "the body of sin" (Rom. 6 : 6), as being full of sins, and infected with all manner of defilements. Not to mention, that there is no creature so bad and pernicious, but that it may be still of some use to men. The foxes and wolves, for instance, with their skins, secure men from the injuries of a rigorous season. But, alas! what good is there to be found in a man abandoned to the conduct of an unregenerate nature? "Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart is only evil continually" (Gen. 6 : 5; 8 : 21); as is more than once expressed in Scripture. He exercises his reason to practise fraud; he wastes his body with pride and lewdness; and is both inwardly and outwardly corrupted, so that all his members are justly called the "instruments" or weapons "of unrighteousness." Rom. 6 : 13. Hence it is, that the Sacred Scriptures represent our nature in colors so dark and odious, as may strike terror into every man that reads them. "There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips; whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness; their feet are swift to shed blood; destruction and misery are in their ways; and the way of peace have they not known; there is no fear of God before their eyes." Rom. 3 : 10–18; Ps. 14.

5. Behold here the deplorable image of the natural man! Behold the abomination that is common to us all! And now tell me how a man can see the kingdom of God, unless he be born again from above, or, as St. Paul expresses it, "unless he be renewed in the spirit of his mind: putting on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness?" Eph. 4 : 23; Col. 3 : 10. And the same apostle says, "But ye have not so learned Christ; if so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus." Eph. 4 : 20, 21. Yea, he says, "They that are Christ's, have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." Gal. 5 : 24. Alas! if those belong not to Christ, who do not mortify the members of unrighteousness, but live in the pollutions of sin, then they surely must belong to the devil, and cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven, since they do not crucify the flesh. For whosoever desires to please God, must become "a new creature" in Christ

(2 Cor. 5 : 17); "in whom neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature." Gal. 6 : 15. Now, since these are the terms on which our eternal welfare depends, let it be our main concern, that we more and more vanquish sin in our mortal bodies, and that we be members, not of Satan, but of Jesus Christ. Let us earnestly endeavor, that the divine Word may gain ground, and bear fruit in our souls. Let us strive to render our lives acceptable to God, so that, being preserved by his grace to the end, we may continue "vessels of mercy, and not of wrath." Rom. 9 : 22, 23.

6. It is for this reason that David so heartily wishes to lead a holy life, conformably to the word of God: "I cried," says he, "with my whole heart; hear me, O Lord; I will keep thy statutes" (Ps. 119 : 145): for since our conversion is entirely from above, it follows, that a holy life must be obtained by continual prayer and supplication. "Heal me, O Lord," says the prophet, "and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved: for thou art my praise." Jer. 17 : 14; 31 : 18. And David says again, "I cried unto thee; save me, and I shall keep thy testimonies." Ps. 119 : 146. Sin and the kingdom of Satan are, indeed, so strong and powerful in man, that it is in vain to attempt their conquest without the divine aid and assistance.

7. Let us therefore shake off all sloth and negligence, and let us acquit ourselves diligently, in a matter of so great importance. David himself further adds, "I prevented (*that is*, I came before) the dawning of the morning, and cried: I hoped in thy word. Mine eyes prevent (*or*, anticipate) the night watches, that I might meditate in thy word." Ps. 119 : 147, 148. And very appropriate are the words of the prophet on this account: "He wakeneth me morning by morning: he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned." Isa. 50 : 4. With which those of Solomon agree: "I sleep, but my heart waketh: it is the voice of my beloved that knocketh." Song 5 : 2.

8. In these and the like sentences of Scripture, we may view the fatherly care and condescending love of our merciful God; since his delight is to be conversant with the sons of men, to speak with them and to instruct them. Hence he appointed his Son to be our heavenly Teacher and Master; of which the Lord Jesus himself gave a visible image when he was found in the temple in the midst of the doctors, and astonished the hearers with "his understanding and answers." Luke 2 : 47. This was done by our Saviour, not merely on account of the Jewish temple, which is now destroyed; but rather on account of the Christian Church itself, which is the true and heavenly Jerusalem, taught and instructed by his Word and Spirit. It was also done with reference to the temple of our heart, in which he will teach, comfort, enlighten, and sanctify us. Here he will pray, ask questions, and answer them; and speak in holy thoughts, and devout meditations. And in this the prophetical office of Christ consists. Hence also he replied to his mother in these words: "How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my father's business?" (Luke 2 : 49), meaning that office which was conferred upon him by his Father. This office he now performs at the right hand of God, as our true and only High priest; and upon earth he discharges it by his *word;* by means of which he also inwardly preaches in our hearts by his

Holy Spirit and gracious illumination. Without this, the outward preaching must prove barren and unfruitful, according to the words of the apostle: "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase." 1 Cor. 3: 6, 7.

CHAPTER VI.

THE PERFECTION AND SALVATION OF MEN DEPEND ON UNION WITH CHRIST BY FAITH; BUT TO THIS THEY CAN CONTRIBUTE NOTHING, WHEREAS THEY RATHER INTERFERE WITH THE GRACE OF GOD BY THEIR PERVERSE WILL; BUT CHRIST, AND HE ALONE, ACCOMPLISHES THE WORK IN US.

Without me ye can do nothing.—John 15: 5.

AS man by his apostasy from God, through ambition and self-love, was separated from him, and fell from the perfection in which he was created, so he must of necessity return to his original tranquillity and happiness, by a *union* with God; in which the whole of human perfection consists. It was therefore necessary, that the Son of God should become man, in order that human nature, being again united to God, might thereby be restored to its primitive integrity and perfection. As the divine and human natures are united in the one Person of Christ, so must we all, through grace, be united to him by faith, as to our eternal and sovereign Good. In this manner it pleased God to rectify the exceeding corruption of our nature by the abounding goodness of his grace. This union is declared by the Son of God himself: "I will betroth thee," says he, "unto me for ever, in loving kindness and in mercies." Hos. 2: 19. For since our nature is infected and corrupted by *sin*, which is the greatest of evils, it could not be restored and healed but by God himself, the sovereign Good.

2. Now as the union of the divine and the human natures in Christ is eternal, and is never to be dissolved, insomuch that even death itself could not break asunder so sacred a bond: so Christ our Head is to be so firmly united with his faithful members, that neither life nor death may ever be able to separate them from him. This is also declared by the prophet Hosea, in the Person of Christ: "I will," says he, "betroth thee unto me for ever."

3. This union by faith, is of the highest necessity, because "our iniquities have separated between us and our God." Isa. 59: 2. And this deplorable state will continue to all eternity, unless Christ dwell in us here by faith. Moreover, we are not able to do the least good, unless Christ himself work it in us. Hence, says the apostle, "Not I, but the grace of God which is with me." 1 Cor. 15: 10. And the Lord himself says: "Without me ye can do nothing" (John 15: 5); the truth of which he illustrates by the beautiful parable of the vine and the branches. Whence it naturally follows, that if we are, or do, any good

at all, it is altogether to be ascribed to God alone; according to what is said by the prophet: "Thou hast wrought all our works in us" (Isa. 26:12); and by another: "I am like a green fir-tree. From me is thy fruit found." Hos. 14:8.

4. O man! consider therefore, what thou art, and what thou canst do. What hast thou been able to contribute to thy restoration and the renovation of thy depraved nature? Surely nothing. As thou couldst not afford any help toward thy bodily birth, nor create thyself; so neither canst thou bring any assistance towards thy new birth or regeneration. Thou canst indeed lose, corrupt, and destroy thyself; but to renew, to restore, to heal, to justify, and to quicken thyself, is a work entirely beyond thy strength. Couldest thou contribute anything that God might become man? No. There is nothing therefore that thou canst arrogate to thyself, or ascribe to thy own ability. Indeed, the more a man attributes to his own will, strength, and ability, the more effectually does he obstruct divine grace, and the renewal of his corrupted nature. Let us therefore wholly renounce our own strength, our own wisdom, our own will, and self-love, that, being thus resigned to God alone, we may suffer his power freely to work in us, so that nothing may, in the least, oppose the will and operations of the Lord.

5. Until thou art brought to this, O Christian, that thy mind becomes merely passive, and that thou purely *sufferest* the operation and will of God, it is evident, that God is impeded by thee, so that he cannot unite himself with thy soul; or by true renovation of thy corrupt nature establish his image there. For our own will, self-love, ambition, the opinion of our own wisdom, and whatever we arrogantly claim to ourselves, are so many impediments, why God cannot freely operate in us, and effect his good will. For as a man's own will more and more corrupts and depraves him; so the will of God more and more perfects and restores him.

6. Hence, it was said by Bonaventura, that "the highest perfection of religion, consists in renouncing our own will." And by Augustine, "If *to love God* is the greatest good to man, *to love himself* must needs be his greatest evil. And, if such is the nature of good, that it diffuses and communicates itself; of necessity self-love must be a great evil, since it engrosses to itself both its own and the goods of others, and will not part with any of them." Of this even the pagan Seneca himself was not ignorant, when he said: "That only is an accession to virtue, which is a denial of thy own will." And again: "Unless thou departest from thyself, thou canst not approach God, who is above thee."

7. Our *own will* is nothing else but a defection or apostasy from God. Defection verily is easy, smooth, and pleasant; but the recovery from it is bitter, troublesome, and difficult; yea, even beyond all the power of the creature. For man, by his own strength, can neither return, nor in any wise help himself, whether in will or deed. Man's will is captive, and his works are dead. Christ alone is able to help, in the beginning, the progress, and the end. He lays before us two means, the *law* and the *gospel;* or *repentance* and *remission* of sin. Through the *law*, in the first place, thou must die with Christ, and by true sorrow and brokenness of heart sacrifice thy own will. Thou must become as nothing;

in thine own eyes, and resign thyself wholly to Christ. Then grace and forgiveness of sin are conferred through the *gospel*, and man, that was dead before, is made alive by faith. Whence it appears, that no man can by his own strength convert and quicken himself. For it is absolutely necessary that he hate, deny, and lose himself; that he be displeased with, and die unto, himself; and that his hope be placed entirely in God alone, by whose grace he expects to live.

8. But even this self-hatred, denial, and mortification, are not the effect of our own will and ability. "It is not," says St. Paul, "of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." Rom. 9 : 16. It is God therefore alone who operates all this in us by his grace, and by the power of his good Spirit: so that our justification is not derived from any creature whatsoever, but from God alone, whose work and gift it is. For the most dangerous enemy any man has, is *himself;* insomuch that we have great reason to implore the Lord to deliver us from ourselves and all that we have by nature, and then to bestow that which flows from his grace. By our own strength we are not able to perform the least good, if God, himself, even after conversion, do not graciously operate in us. Who is there that can endue us with love and mercy, but God, who is Love itself, and from whom all other graces proceed? Therefore, Christ *alone* is our help and support, when the help of men cannot avail. But after all, be the condition ever so low to which man has been brought by the fall of Adam, he is now raised again by Christ, and even exalted to a higher degree than he possessed before. But of this more shall be said in Chapter XI.

CHAPTER VII.

SHOWING THAT IN ORDER TO UNDERSTAND THE TRUE NATURE OF REPENTANCE, WE MUST NECESSARILY KNOW THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE OLD AND THE NEW MAN; OR, HOW IN US ADAM MUST DIE, AND CHRIST LIVE; OR, HOW IN US THE OLD MAN MUST DIE, AND THE NEW MAN LIVE.

We know this, that our old man is crucified with Christ, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.—Rom. 6 : 6.

IN every Christian there is found a twofold man, opposed, like their fruits, to one another. This will more fully appear from the following statement:

Adam,	Christ.
Old man,	New man.
Outward man,	Inward man.
Old birth,	New birth.
Flesh,	Spirit.
Nature,	Grace.
Reason,	Faith.
Darkness,	Light.
Tree of death,	Tree of life.
Evil fruit,	Good fruit.
Sin,	Righteousness.
Damnation,	Salvation.
Death,	Life.
Old Jerusalem,	New Jerusalem.
Kingdom of the devil,	Kingdom of God.
Seed of the serpent,	Seed of God.
Natural man,	Spiritual man.
Image of the earthly,	Image of the heavenly.

The truth of this statement, the Scriptures, as well as experience, abundantly confirm. The former speak largely of the old man and the new, of the inward and outward man. See Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:9; 2 Cor. 4:16. They teach also that the Spirit of God is in us: Rom. 8:11; 1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19; 2 Cor. 5:5; Eph. 1:13. And likewise Christ, Gal. 2:20; 2 Cor. 13:5. *Experience*, moreover, demonstrates the same. Hither may also be referred that striving and struggling of the flesh and Spirit, from which even the saints are not free. Rom. 7:23. Likewise there belong here the different fruits of the flesh and Spirit reckoned up by St. Paul. Gal. 5:19–23. This point is therefore clearly stated in Scripture, and too certain to be called in question by any Christian. It is the hinge, as it were, on which all the Scripture moves, and the foundation on which the true knowledge of man depends. Out of the same fountain issue true repentance, or the death of Adam, and the life of Christ in us. For no sooner does Adam die in us, but there perishes with him all that is originally derived from him; the old outward man, the old birth, the flesh, nature, corrupt reason, darkness, the tree of death, evil fruits, sin, death, damnation, the seed of the serpent, the natural man, the earthly image, the old Jerusalem, and the kingdom of Satan. But as long as Adam lives, there also live and reign with him the old man, and the carnal birth, the flesh, nature, corrupt reason, darkness, and the whole train of evils before mentioned, being all comprised under the kingdom of Satan, and subject to damnation, and to the curse everlasting. But if, on the other hand, Christ live in any one, then verily there live and reign with him the new and inward man, the new birth, the Spirit, grace, faith, light, the tree of life, good fruits, righteousness, life, happiness, the seed of God, the spiritual man, the heavenly image, the new Jerusalem, and the kingdom of God. All which proceed from the divine blessing, and tend to eternal salvation. Here is a matter of importance, namely, so to order one's life and conduct, that Christ the new or second Adam, and not the old Adam, may live and reign in us.

2. Therefore it is necessary for a man to watch, to fast, to pray, fight, and strive; and, as St. Paul expresses it, to examine himself if Christ be in him. 2 Cor. 13:5. He is to work out his salvation with fear and trembling. Phil. 2:12. He is to enter through the strait gate and the narrow way in Christ. Matt. 7:13. That is, man must now hate and deny himself, forsake all (Luke 14:26), and die unto sin. Rom. 6:2. This surely is not to be effected, as the delicate Christians of this age imagine, by any careless and slight application of mind, but by an inward and profound sorrow, contrition, and brokenness of heart, together with groans and tears that cannot be uttered. These inward exercises, and acts of devotion, are most feelingly set forth by David in his Penitential Psalms, which abound with expressions of this nature. Ps. 6; 32; 38; 51; 102; 130; 143. The apostle calls it a crucifying of the flesh with the affections and lusts thereof. Gal. 5:24. Whoever attains to this state, in him verily Christ lives, and he reciprocally in Christ by faith. Then Christ conquers and reigns in man, whose faith is become "the victory that overcometh the world." 1 John 5:4.

3. But since the world, which thou art to strive against, is not *without* thee, but *within* thee, it follows, that it is also to be conquered not without, but within thee. For what is the world, but "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life?" 1 John 2:16. As these are in thee, so in thee they are to be subdued, that thus thou mayest worthily bear the name and character of a true child of God. "For whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the world" (1 John 5:4); and if thou overcomest, and gainest the victory over thy great enemy the world, thou art then a child of light (Eph. 5:8), a member of Christ (1 Cor. 12:27; Eph. 5:30), and the temple of the Holy Ghost. 1 Cor. 6:19. Thou art now a good tree (Matt. 12:33), that freely and without constraint, yea, with joy, love, and pleasure, bringeth forth fruit to the glory of God. Matt. 5:16.

4. But if thou livest in Adam, and Adam reigns in thee, then thou art not a child of God, nor born again of him. For since thou art overcome by the world, and since the prince thereof rules in thee by pride, ambition, and self-love, thou art on this very account to be numbered amongst the children of the devil. John 8:44. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." Rom. 8:14. And, on the contrary, as many as are led by Satan, they likewise are his children; yea, they are the very members of Satan, sons of darkness, a habitation of unclean spirits, an accursed Babylon, full of impure and of abominable beasts; as it is represented by the ancient prophets (Isa. 13:21; Rev. 18:2); but particularly by the prophet Ezekiel. He being brought in spirit into the temple at Jerusalem, beheld two remarkable things: one whereof was, "every form of creeping things, and abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel, portrayed upon the wall round about;" and secondly (which was still more detestable), "seventy men of the ancients of the house of Israel, worshipping these beasts and images, and offering them incense." Ezek. 8:10, 11.

5. Behold, O man, a lively representation here given of thy depraved, brutish, and beastly heart! If thou wilt but enter into this temple of thy heart, thou shalt surely find therein vast numbers of foul, detestable creatures, images, and idols, fashioned and represented by all manner of corrupt and impure thoughts in the carnal mind, imagination, and memory. Moreover (and this is the greatest evil of all), though these idols and horrid abominations should be utterly banished from the heart, and this detestable evil, by which man is made the habitation of unclean and pestilential reptiles, should, by all means, be destroyed by repentance, by mortification of the flesh, and by penitential tears and humiliation; yet, instead of doing that, thou lovest these serpents, adorest these vile monsters, and servest and caressest them. Alas! thou but little regardest that Christ is cast out of thy soul by these abominations, and is utterly banished from thy heart; and that by this means thou deprivest thyself of the supreme and eternal Good, losing the Holy Spirit with all his excellent gifts and graces. O miserable man! thou exceedingly grievest when any outward trouble befalls thee, or when thou losest anything in the world that is dear to thee; why then is it, that thou art not at all concerned at the loss even of Christ himself, and at the deplorable state of thy soul and body, which are

both become a habitation of malignant spirits!

6. If these things be seriously pondered and laid to heart, we shall soon understand what Adam and Christ are; and how they live and act in men. To this head we may also refer the following observations. First, In Adam we are ALL naturally equal, nor is one better than another; since we are all, both as to body and soul, equally polluted and corrupted, so that it is affirmed by St. Paul, not only of Jews and Gentiles, but even of all men in general, that "there is no difference." Rom. 3 : 22. Hence it is also true, that in the sight of God, no man is better than the most profligate criminal. For though that perverse temper which is natural to all, does not equally in all break out into works, yet God judges all men by the inward state of the heart, that poisoned fountain of all sin. Nor is there any sin so heinous, which man by nature would not freely commit, were he not strongly restrained by divine grace. For by the bent of our nature we are but too much inclined to pollute ourselves with all manner of wickedness (Jer. 13 : 23); and if the inclination be not always attended with the external effect itself, it is wholly to be attributed to the grace of God, and not to any strength or prudence of our own. Gen. 20 : 6. This consideration should excite us to the practice of true humility, and to an unfeigned fear of God; and at the same time restrain us from rashly despising our fellow-creatures, lest, by reflecting on others, we ourselves split upon the dangerous rock of carnal presumption. Secondly, It is proper to observe, that as in Adam we are all equally bad with regard to the corruption of nature; so by Christ we are all made equally just and holy; no man receiving for himself any prerogative of a peculiar righteousness in the sight of God. For since Christ is our perfection, our "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption" (1 Cor. 1 : 30; 6 : 11), we, who in *Adam* are alike, are also alike in *Christ*. For as in *Adam* by nature we are all one man and one body, infected with the foul contagion of disobedience and sin, so all true Christians are as one man in *Christ*, and make up one body, completely purified and sanctified by faith, and the blood of Christ.

7. This truth is a remedy against *spiritual pride*, namely, that none should account himself better before God than others, though perhaps adorned with greater gifts, and endowments. For even these are no less bestowed on him of pure grace, than are righteousness and salvation themselves. Upon this principle of pure grace, be careful to keep thy mind constantly fixed. If thou dost so, then this grace shall protect thee against the dangerous snares of pride and arrogance; and as, on the one hand, it will convince thee of thy own misery and poverty in spirit, so, on the other, it will give thee a most lively insight into Christ, and into the exceeding riches of grace, offered through him to all mankind.

CHAPTER VIII.

SHOWING HOW GRACIOUSLY GOD INVITES US TO REPENTANCE, AND HOW NECESSARY IT IS THAT IT SHOULD NOT BE DELAYED.

Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.—Luke 15 : 10.

GOD, who is of infinite mercy, in order that he might the better soften our hard and stony hearts, and turn them from the world, ourselves, and the devil, unto himself (Acts 26 : 18), has, in his Word, variously represented and set before our eyes man's conversion and repentance.

2. Among other ways of impressing it on our minds, the two parables of the *Lost Sheep* and of the *Prodigal Son* (Luke, chap. 15), are exceedingly affecting, and are so abundant in divine consolation, that it is scarcely possible seriously to think upon them without tears. Therein our Saviour describes three different hearts. Of these the first is, the impenitent heart of a sinner; the second, the contrite heart of a penitent; the third, the heart of God, full of mercy and paternal affection.

3. The *first* he describes under the similitude of a degenerate son, wastefully spending his substance and inheritance, and at last reduced to such necessity, as to wish to fill his belly with the husks which the swine did eat. By this figure all mankind in their natural state are shadowed forth; who, as so many degenerate sons, have squandered away the heavenly inheritance by continual riot and wickedness. That is, they have lost their original righteousness, holiness, innocency, and the beautiful image of God, in which they were at first created (Eph. 4 : 24), and are now by their own fault become the bond-slaves of sin, of the devil, and of death. And to complete their ruin, finding no relief, rest, or comfort, in any human performances and laws (which answer to the husks in the parable) they must of necessity perish with endless famine and misery, unless they speedily have recourse unto the grace of their Heavenly Father.

4. The *second* heart, which is that of a repenting sinner, is set forth in these words: "How many hired servants of my Father have bread enough, and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise, and go to my Father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee; and am no more worthy to be called thy son." In this account we have a very moving description of true repentance. By the Prodigal's coming to himself, is signified sorrow for sin; that is, when a man, on the one hand, reflects upon his own misery, and considers how, from being a child of God, he is become, as it were, a brute beast (2 Pet. 2 : 12), an unclean swine, a man void of reason, earthly and sensual; and, on the other, mindful of his divine origin, turns his thoughts entirely upon his Father, repents, acknowledges his offences, and says, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee;" and have offended both God and man.

This he immediately confirms by a sincere contempt of himself, expressed in these words: "and am no more worthy to be called thy son." Moreover, *faith*, which is the other part of repentance, is exhibited to us in his actual *arising* and *returning* to his father's house. He assumed confidence to repair to his home, and firmly persuaded himself that his father would receive him, if not as a son, at least as one of his hired servants. "For," says he, "I am no more worthy to be called thy son; make me as one of thy hired servants." This plainly shows the sure hope he entertained, that his father would yield to his entreaties, and receive him into his favor.

5. And now I come, *thirdly*, to draw the character of the paternal heart of God, set forth in the parable.

I. *When the son was yet a great way off, his father saw him.* Behold the prevenient mercy of our Heavenly Father, who graciously looks for his prodigal children. Ps. 79:8; Isa. 30:18, 19; Ps. 32:8.

II. *And was moved with compassion.* Hereby is represented his mercy waiting to be gracious to us.

III. *And ran and fell on his neck.* Here is mercy receiving into favor.

IV. *And kissed him.* This exhibits mercy ready to administer consolation to the returning sinner. Micah 7:19; Isa. 66:13.

V. *Bring forth*, says he, *the best robe, and put it on him* (Isa. 61:10). This has relation to Christ, and points out his righteousness, and *justifying* grace. Rom. 8:33.

VI. *And put a ring on his hand.* Hereby is signified the Holy Spirit, the pledge of sonship (Gal. 4:6; Eph. 1:5), the seal of intimate favor and union; and it also represents to us the espousing mercy of the Lord.

VII. *And shoes on his feet.* This denotes a new and holy walk in Christ, resulting from the Divine power, and the grace of the Holy Spirit; which are the peculiar effects of preserving mercy. 1 Peter 1:5; Ps. 84:11.

VIII. *Bring hither the fatted calf.* By this feast is represented the joy of angels, or rejoicing and *crowning* mercy, described by the holy Psalmist, and the prophet Isaiah. Ps. 63:5; 103:5; Isa. 65:13.

6. What strong and endearing arguments are here offered by the goodness of God inviting us to sincere repentance! Let us, then, seriously consider some of the main *inducements* to true repentance, of which seven shall be proposed at present.

I. The boundless mercy of God.
II. The kindness of Christ, and his inestimable merit.
III. The awful threatenings and punishments that are laid before us.
IV. Death.
V. The last judgment,
VI. Hell. And
VII. Everlasting joy.

I. THE MERCY OF GOD.

7. "If thou shalt seek the Lord thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart, and with all thy soul. When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee, even in the latter days, if thou turn to the Lord thy God, and shalt be obedient unto his voice; (for the Lord thy God is a merciful God;) he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers, which he sware unto them." Deut. 4:29–31. What tender affection, as of the heart of a father, have we here presented to us! And how just and reasonable is it, that it should move us to repentance! For how numerous and *great* soever our

sins may be, the mercy of God is still *greater,* according to the words of the Psalmist: "With the Lord there is mercy; and with him is plenteous redemption. And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities." Ps. 130:7, 8. And again: "According unto the multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out my transgressions." Ps. 51:1. Nor are our sins so filthy and abominable, but God can make them white as snow. "Though your sins," says the prophet, "be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow." Isa. 1:18. And the Psalmist says: "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." Ps. 51:7. Neither are they so various and manifold, but that they are surpassed by the riches of divine grace, according to the apostle: "In Christ we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." Eph. 1:7. And what we read in Exodus teaches the same: "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth; forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin." Exod. 34:6, 7. Nor are they so strong and powerful, but God can destroy them, and throw them into the depth of the sea, as he did unto Pharaoh and all his host. "He will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea." Micah 7:19. Nor, finally, are they so mortal and pestilential, but God can heal them, as the prophet assures us: "The wicked shall not fall by his wickedness in the day that he turneth from it." Ezek. 33:12.

II. THE KINDNESS OF CHRIST.

8. How kindly and affectionately Christ Jesus receives sinners, he himself abundantly declares in the Gospel: "They that be whole," says he, "need not a physician, but they that are sick. I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Matt. 9:12, 13. "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." Luke 19:10. Of this gracious bounty of Christ towards returning sinners, the prophets have left us many predictions. "Woe be to the shepherds of Israel," saith Ezekiel, "who have not sought that which was lost: but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them. And they were scattered, because there is no shepherd. Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out. As a shepherd seeketh out his flock, in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick." Ezek. 34:2, 4, 12, 16. And the prophet Isaiah says, "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom." Isai. 40:11. Nor should only the *gracious nature* of Christ move thee to repentance; but more especially his extreme *sorrow,* and most innocent blood shed on thine account. For consider within thyself:

(1.) That he laid down his life, not for heaven or earth, but for thy soul. And wilt thou, by sin and impenitence, wantonly cast away so great and valuable a treasure?

(2.) Remember, that thou couldest not have been redeemed by any other or less price than the precious blood of Christ (1 Pet. 1:19). Why shouldest thou deprive thyself of a ransom so inestimable as the Redeemer has paid for thee?

(3.) Call to mind, that Christ has

redeemed thee from the world, from sin and the devil. And dost thou desire to continue longer in the service of so hard and cruel a master?

(4.) Be assured, that without unfeigned repentance, the merit of Christ will avail thee nothing; yea, that thou tramplest under foot his blood, and dost "despite unto the Spirit of grace." Heb. 10 : 29.

(5.) Lastly, consider how sharp and cruel were the sufferings which thy Saviour underwent on thy account! How he wept and sorrowed, trembled and feared! Heb. 5 : 7. How grievously he was wounded for thy transgressions (Isa. 53 : 5), and, at last, as a worm (Ps. 22 : 6), and cursed (Gal. 3 : 13), hung upon a tree! How loudly this mournful scene calls on thee to repent!

III. THREATS OF TEMPORAL PUNISHMENT.

9. "God judgeth the righteous," saith the Psalmist, "and God is angry with the wicked every day. If he turn not, he will whet his sword: he hath bent his bow, and made it ready: he hath also prepared for him the instruments of death: he ordaineth his arrows against the persecutors." Ps. 7 : 11–13.

10. This wrath and revenge, no man will ever be able to escape, as the prophet Amos affirms: "He that escapeth of them shall not be delivered. Though they climb up to heaven, thence I will bring them down: and though they be hid from my sight in the bottom of the sea, thence will I command the serpent, and he shall bite them. Behold, the eyes of the Lord God are upon the sinful kingdom, and I will destroy it from off the face of the earth." Amos 9 : 1–3, 8. "Their blood shall be poured out as dust," saith Zephaniah, 1 : 17, 18, "and their flesh as the dung. Neither their silver, nor their gold, shall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord's wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of his jealousy." Such terrible threatenings as these should lead us to unfeigned repentance; this being the only means by which to prevent impending desolation, and the total destruction of nations and cities; as evidently appears from the example of Nineveh. Jonah 3 : 5, 10. "At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; if that nation against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them." Jer. 18 : 7, 8.

IV. DEATH.

11. God has concealed the time of our death from us, that thereby we may be kept in the daily and uninterrupted practice of true repentance, as not knowing which hour may be our last. "The whole life of a man is given him for repentance," saith St. Bernard. And this repentance is a Christian's daily cross and tribulation. Thus it is said in the Psalms: "I am ready to halt, and my sorrow is continually before me." Ps. 38 : 17; 73 : 14. God has promised grace to the penitent, but he has not promised to sinners another day in which to repent. "It is appointed unto men once to die; but after this the judgment." Heb. 9 : 27. Such as God shall find thee, as such will he judge thee: wherefore, live in such a manner as thou wouldest wish to have done, when thou art dying. Consider seriously in thy mind, where they now are, who but a few years ago wasted

their lives with lust and vanity, and freely enjoyed the "good things" of this world? Luke 16 : 25. They are all gone to their own place, where they wait for the day of judgment. Wherefore, "come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." Rev. 18 : 4.

V. THE LAST JUDGMENT.

12. For after death, there is neither place nor time for repentance. It is in this world that eternal life is either lost or obtained. Those that repent betimes, shall not be condemned in judgment; but the impenitent will hear the awful sentence: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire." Matt. 25 : 41. "Behold, therefore, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation!" (2 Cor. 6 : 2), which will be followed by the day of judgment in the other world. "To-day, therefore, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation; lest I swear in my wrath, that ye shall not enter into my rest." Ps. 95 : 7, 8, 11; Heb. 3 : 7, 8, 11. "For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, whether it be good or bad." 2 Cor. 5 : 10. Those, therefore, who here repent, "shall have their sins covered" (Ps. 32 : 1), and "they shall no more be mentioned unto them," as the prophet declares. Ezek. 33 : 16. Lay hold, therefore, on the offer of mercy betimes, know and confess thy sins, O man, that they may be remitted and forgotten.

VI. ETERNAL PAINS OF HELL.

13. With this present life, the season of the mercy of God closes. It will then be said: "Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things." Luke 16 : 25. Thy life is now over. Thou art now dead! Dead to God forever, to whom thou didst refuse to live in time! There is no redemption from hell. Ps. 49 : 14–20. How can the damned enjoy the goodness of God, to which they were dead whilst they were alive, and to which they will now continue dead to all eternity! Remember, therefore, that now is the only time for mercy, and the hour of visitation to repent; whereas, there the damned so die, as, notwithstanding, always to live; and so live, as yet to die eternally. All the senses will there suffer torment. The sight shall be punished with eternal darkness; the ears shall be filled with weeping and gnashing of teeth; the smell with stench of fire and brimstone; the taste with the bitterness of eternal death; and the feeling with a sense of endless tortures and miseries.

VII. THE JOY OF ETERNAL LIFE.

14. Is it not a very high degree of folly, to prefer a short perishing pleasure to an eternal joy; and a worthless trifle, to the glorious presence of God? Now none shall enter into this, but he who has thoroughly washed himself, and "made white his robes in the blood of the Lamb." Rev. 3 : 14. "For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie." Rev. 22 : 15. None of those, who, having been here invited to the feast of Christ, yet refused to come, "shall taste of his supper." Luke 14 : 24. The highest joy of eternal life, will consist in "seeing God as he is." 1 John 3 : 2. *To see God*, is all in all, and an eternal reward. "Ye shall see me," says our Lord, "and

your heart shall rejoice; and your joy no man taketh from you." John 16 : 19, 22. This sight of the face of God is the joy of the angels; it is their life, and the invisible food by which they are sustained. Now as this vision of God creates the most exalted joy, so to be banished from it, is to suffer the greatest, the most terrible, and the most severe torment, and eternal misery.

CHAPTER IX.

SHOWING WHAT REPENTANCE IS, AND THE MANNER IN WHICH THE SINNER TRULY REPENTS; ALSO, HOW THE GOODNESS OF GOD LEADS US TO REPENTANCE.

Therefore also now, saith the Lord, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: and rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil.—JOEL 2 : 12, 13.

THE Lord, whose mercy is infinite, by no means seeks our destruction, but rather our life and happiness. He best knows the wretched and deplorable condition into which we are fallen by sin; and he is also desirous to reclaim us from that dangerous state, and to preserve us from everlasting ruin. It is for this reason, that he so earnestly invites the soul to repentance, and engages us to the same by many strong and powerful motives.

2. Sometimes God is pleased to stir us up by terrible *threatenings*. "Behold," says he, "I will bring evil upon this people; because they have not hearkened unto my words, nor to my law, but rejected it." Jer. 6 : 19. Again, "And now, because ye have done all these works, saith the Lord, and I spake unto you, rising up early and speaking, but ye heard not; therefore, will I cast you out of my sight." Jer. 7 : 13, 15. This dreadful proclamation of both temporal and eternal calamities, should strike fear and terror into us: for the threatening of God is not an empty voice, nor a sound that vanishes into nothing, but it is accompanied with many terrible effects, and consuming wrath, as will in its time more fully appear, and which we even feel already by sad experience; since miseries and calamities, like a flood, seem to carry all before them. Nay, they will undoubtedly multiply upon us, and exert themselves with the utmost fury and fierceness, except we betimes prevent them by a sincere repentance. Thus the wrath of God shall be poured forth in wars, famines, pestilence, fire, and inundations, till he has at length destroyed our very *foundations*, as he did once to the city of Jerusalem. Lam. 4 : 11.

3. But if the proclamation of wrath and judgment cannot prevail upon us, yet ought God's abounding *goodness*, attended as it is with so many endearing marks of love, to melt our hearts, and to soften them into true and earnest repentance. For thus hath the Lord spoken by the prophet: "Return, thou backsliding Israel, and

I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful, saith the Lord, and I will not keep anger for ever. Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the Lord thy God." Jer. 3 : 12, 13. In these words, God makes a free offer of his grace, entreats and adjures us to return to him again, for he is willing to accept our repentance.

4. The passages that have been quoted, are a convincing proof that God, by his grace, mercy, patience, and clemency, strongly invites us to true repentance. There are chiefly three things in those scriptures, which deserve a more particular observation: namely, the *nature* of repentance, or what it is to repent; that is, to turn unto the Lord:—the *manner* in which repentance is to be wrought out; that is, by fasting, weeping, and mourning:—the *motive* to engage us in so holy an exercise, which is the paternal goodness of God; "*for I am merciful.*"

As to the *first*, we know that *to repent*, is nothing else but to be led, through the *law* of God, to acknowledge the natural blindness of our hearts, and that detestable impurity which lurks within. Next, we ought to regard this as the very source whence all other sins proceed, and whereby we depart from God, the supreme and eternal Good, deserving not only various punishments here, but also his everlasting wrath in hell hereafter. All this ought to awaken in us sorrow and distress, not so much by reason of the threatened punishment, as rather on account of the heinousness of the many provocations offered to a merciful Father, who in his very nature is love and kindness. This being done, we may then raise again our souls by virtue of the *Gospel*, and with a well-grounded faith, rely on the favor of God, and on the sure remission of sin promised in Christ Jesus. This must necessarily be attended with a serious amendment of life, with a constant purification of the heart by faith, with a mortification of all evil desires, and with a sincere abnegation of our own will, so opposite to that of God. In a word, it will be accompanied with a new life acceptable unto God in Christ, and with fruit worthy of repentance; suitably to what God enjoins by the prophet: "Wash ye, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do well. Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow." Isaiah 1 : 16, 18.

5. But alas! here is the difficulty! These things are much more easily said, than reduced to practice. The reason is, because hardly any will earnestly engage in so weighty a work, or search into the true original cause of the many dreadful disorders that appear in our lives and conduct. Man flatters himself with a confident opinion of his own goodness, and cherishes the affection of the old man. There are few who care to see their hearts in their inward and native depravity; or to be made sensible of that vein of evil nature which runs through all their actions, even the best and most shining. And thus Christ himself, and the grace of God, manifested by him, are wantonly disregarded.

6. And yet Joel (2 : 12) requires us to "turn unto God with all our heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning." Hereby he intimates that we are turned away from God; have forsaken the fountain of living waters (Jer. 2 : 13); and are now unable to attain life and happiness again, unless we "*search* our ways," and "*return*"

unto him from whom we are gone astray. Lam. 3 : 40. It is for this purpose that the Prophet charges "backsliding children" to return, with the promise annexed, that the "Lord will heal their backslidings." Jer. 3 : 22. For this verily is the will of God, that we should see and confess our misery, in order that he may compassionately heal it.

7. But since, by nature, we are so blind as to be utterly unable of ourselves sufficiently to discover our own wretchedness; God has been pleased to afford means, with a view to bringing us to a sound knowledge of ourselves. This is done by his holy Word and the Sacraments, which are always accompanied with his grace and Spirit. By these the Father draws, allures, and calls us to himself, as so many lost and wandering sheep. John 6 : 44. For as a straying sheep cannot of itself return, but must of necessity be sought and brought back to the fold by the shepherd, so we would forever go astray in the wilderness of sin and error, did not God himself carefully seek us; and this the examples of Peter and Paul abundantly confirm. Therefore the prophet says: "Turn thou me, O Lord, and I shall be turned; for thou art the Lord my God." Jer. 31 : 18. "Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved: for thou art my praise." Jer. 17 : 14. "For it is God," says the apostle, "which worketh in us, both to will and to do, of his good pleasure." Phil. 2 : 13.

8. When, therefore, the Lord graciously awakens us by these means, and invites us to repentance, it is our part, not to withstand his grace and Spirit; (as it is said, "To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts") (Ps. 95 : 7, 8); but to confess the sin which he thus reproves in us, and by no means make light of the grace offered to us in the Gospel. Then God will assuredly have mercy upon us, as he himself declares: "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." Isa. 55 : 7.

9. Upon this account the work of conversion, though it is entirely a work of God's grace, is yet in one respect ascribed to us; namely, as we *give* up ourselves to the Lord, and to his operations, and do not wantonly resist his Spirit, despise his grace, and cast it from us; or, as the apostle expresses it, do not put his Word from us, nor stop our ears against it, as did the Jews of old. Acts 13 : 46; 7 : 57. On the contrary, when the severity of the *law* has laid open our spiritual diseases, and we have felt the bitterness thereof; let us avail ourselves of the *Gospel* as a healing remedy, and suffer our heavenly Physician to restore us to health.

10. An image of this we have in a straying sheep. If it but hear at a distance the voice of the shepherd, it starts back immediately, and returns to him. And how willingly would the lost sinner follow the voice of his Shepherd, if sin had not so perverted him, as to reduce him lower than the very beasts in stupidity and dulness! Of this indeed the prophet complains: "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider." Isa. 1 : 3. "Shall they fall," asks another prophet, "and not arise? Shall he turn away, and not return? The stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times, and the turtle, and

the crane, and the swallow, observe the times of their coming: but my people know not the judgment of the Lord." Jer. 8:4, 7.

11. We ought, therefore, most fervently to implore the Lord, not to withdraw from us his gracious assistance, without which we must certainly go astray. For since sin and the old Adam constantly abide in our corrupt flesh and blood, we have need of daily, yea, hourly supplies of grace, for repressing the tyranny of sin, and for nourishing the life of God within us. The grace of God is the life of our soul, as the soul is the life of the body. And as the life of the body, without the free enjoyment of the air, must soon be extinct; so the vital flame of the inward life will speedily languish, without a daily supply of grace to support it. For this reason Solomon prayed: "The Lord our God be with us; let him not leave us, nor forsake us; that he may incline our hearts unto him, to walk in all his ways." 1 Kings 8:57.

12. This is a lesson which ought not to be learned in a light and general manner, but by a close and practical application be brought home to every one in particular. Let, therefore, every one look into his own heart and seek its renewal, that so all may be reformed in time. Let us remember that comfortable exhortation, and the promise annexed thereto: "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near." Isa. 55:6. "And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart, saith the Lord." Jer. 29:13.

13. But in order to true repentance, it is not enough to refrain only from gross sins, and foul visible transgressions; but the heart, whence all those evils proceed, is to be changed and purified; that so inward pride, covetousness, and lust, with all sinful affections, may be mortified at last. For whilst the heart is unchanged, unreformed, and unrenewed; that is, whilst our own corrupt temper, our inward malice, wrath, hatred, enmity, revenge, lying, and deceit, are quietly suffered within us; all our boasts of, and pretences to, and formalities in, religion, are but mere show and hypocrisy. God requires no less than a new heart, and "a new creature in Christ Jesus." 2 Cor. 5:17. No one is so holy, so good, and so thoroughly cleansed, but he will still find something in his own heart to be thrown out, or to be amended and rectified. "As a fountain casteth out her waters, so Jerusalem casteth out her wickedness." Jer. 6:7. This is the first head, relating to the nature of repentance, of which more has been said in Book I.

14. Let us now consider, in the second place, the *manner* of our returning to God: "with all the heart," says the prophet, "with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning." Wretched mortals can weep floods of tears for empty and perishing goods, whilst they stand unmoved at the miserable state of their souls, and at the loss of an eternal and incorruptible inheritance! In this they are altogether unlike David, who, by his example, sets a most shining pattern of sincere and unfeigned repentance before us. See Ps. 6, and Ps. 38. "For the Lord looketh on the heart" (1 Sam. 16:7), and "trieth the heart and reins." Ps. 7:9.

15. What the prophet says of fasting, is to be understood of a general fast enjoined by the prophet to all the people. In such a fast the whole body of a nation were wont to be concerned.

They publicly confessed their sins; they deplored and bewailed them; and thus humbling themselves before God, fasted both inwardly and outwardly. And in this order they begged remission of sin, and deprecated the judgments of God gathering over them. Such a general fast and public repentance as this, such sincere conversion, prayer, faith, confession, and supplication, are the most effectual means to appease the wrath of an offended God, and to avert his judgments from whole kingdoms and nations. This plainly appears from the history of the defeat of the other tribes of Israel, by that of Benjamin; in which the former having in two battles lost forty thousand men, all went up and came before the Lord, with weeping and mourning, and there fasted the whole day, from morning to night. Judges 20 : 26. A similar illustrious example is recorded of the fast of the Ninevites (Jonah 3 : 5, 10): and of the children of Israel, who, being beaten by the Philistines, kept a fast for seven days together, after Saul and Jonathan were slain in the battle. 1 Chron. 10 : 12.

16. Such solemn penitential fasts were also in use in the primitive Church, when the Christians met together, and in any great public calamity humbled themselves before the Lord. Not, surely, to obtain remission of sin by such performances, as so many meritorious acts of devotion; but by a contrite, sober, and humble heart, to deprecate the judgments that were ready to break in upon them. And such fasts might with propriety still be observed.

17. Fasts such as these, accompanied with true repentance, would prove an impregnable wall and fortification against all our enemies; a sovereign medicine in all pestilential diseases; and a safeguard about all our estates and possessions. An example of this we have in Job, who, whenever his children had spent any day in mirth and feasting, "offered up unto God prayers and sacrifices for them" (Job 1:4, 5); and thus, as it were, fortified his house by prayer against the insults of wicked men and devils.

18. In great public calamities the Lord looks out for such men as may, like a bulwark, oppose his wrath when ready to make a breach. "I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none. Therefore have I poured out mine indignation upon them, I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath: their own way have I recompensed upon their heads, saith the Lord God." Ezek. 22 : 30, 31. We may also remember, on this occasion, the intercession of Abraham. Gen. 18 : 23.

19. Thus the prophet Daniel was a wall of defence when he made confession to God of the sins of all the people. Dan. 9 : 4, 5, etc. And the prophet Joel, in very moving terms, describes such a penitential fast: "Blow the trumpet in Zion; sanctify a fast; call a solemn assembly; gather the people; sanctify the congregation; assemble the elders; gather the children, and those that suck the breasts; let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet. Let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, say, Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach." Joel 2 : 15–17.

20. Such public fasts ought to be celebrated by the whole multitude, without hypocrisy, with ardent zeal

and devotion; for it is the will of God, that every one readily confess his sins. He requires true humility, sincere repentance, and a turning to him with our whole heart. Hence the prophet commands the "heart, and not the garments," to be rent. The Jews, at the hearing of any sad or terrible evil, were accustomed to rend their clothes, in order to evidence thereby the inward sorrow with which they were affected. This, however, like their fasting, was often a mere formality, and their grief was only pretended. Wherefore, the prophet reproves them, saying, "Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? Is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? Wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the Lord? Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? When thou seest the naked, that thou cover him, and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?" Isa. 58: 5–7.

21. These words explain the nature of a true fast; which is then only kept, when, on the one hand, we abstain from sin, subdue the wanton lusts of the flesh, and keep the old man, with all his members, under constant restraint and subjection: and, on the other, when we are fervent in works of charity, in the practice of patience and mercy, and of the other virtues springing up from a contrite, sincere, and penitent heart. And it is with regard to these inward acts of humiliation, that the prophet bids us *rend our hearts*. For as the wounds of the heart must necessarily be very painful; so the grief occasioned by our sins should affect us, as if our very hearts were bruised and crushed. And this "broken spirit," this "contrite heart," is that *sacrifice* which is so highly acceptable to God. Ps. 51: 17. Such a heart has, by faith, obtained a due fitness to receive the influence of the grace of God, the consolations of the Holy Spirit, and the merit and blood of Jesus Christ. As a hard and massive stone cannot be penetrated by the oil or water poured upon it, until it be broken to pieces; so the sovereign balm of God's grace and consolation cannot comfort and quicken the heart, except it be first broken and softened into humility, that so by faith it may partake of the merit of Christ. "Not the whole, but the sick, have need of a physician." Matt. 9: 12. Let no one think that he belongs to Christ, unless he has first "crucified the flesh, with its affections and lusts." Gal. 5: 24. The blood of Christ will be of no profit to any except to those who embrace it with a contrite, afflicted, penitent, humble and believing heart.

22. As for the *motives* to repentance, which make up the third head, they are thus expressed by the prophet: "Turn unto the Lord, *for* he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil." Joel 2: 12, 13. He lays down in these words, a gradual display of the manifold mercies offered to returning sinners. As if he had said, "If you think it a small thing that I am *gracious*, then know that I am *merciful* also: if this be not enough, I am likewise *patient* and *slow to anger*: if this will not yet suffice, then I am, moreover, of *great kindness*. If, after

all, you still require something more, then understand, that I easily *repent* of intended punishments; yea, even when my avenging hand is lifting up, I am ready to let fall the rod, upon your serious repentance."

23. First, then, the prophet calls God *gracious* (Ps. 103 : 8); that is, ready to be entreated and reconciled. God is easy to be prevailed with, forgives offences, deals not in strict justice and the rigor of the law, according to what we have deserved. And all these marks of mercy should lead us to repentance. There are many admirable promises, all tending to the same end. "If thou afflict them, they will cry unto me, and I will surely hear; for I am gracious." Ex. 22 : 23, 27. "Therefore will the Lord wait that he may be gracious unto you. Thou shalt weep no more; he will be very gracious unto thee, at the voice of thy cry; when he shall hear it, he will answer thee." Isa. 30 : 18. That is, the Most High is so rich in grace, that he waits for you. In him there is *expecting grace*, by which he readily receives those that truly return: *prevenient grace*, expressed by the Psalmist—"Let thy tender mercies speedily prevent (*that is*, meet, *or* anticipate) us" (Ps. 79 : 8): *protecting grace*, noticed by the same prophet; "He that trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about" (Ps. 32 : 10): *preserving grace;* "Surely," says David, "mercy shall follow me all the days of my life." Ps. 23 : 6. Of this we have given examples in the preceding chapter. With this agree also the words of Scripture: "With the Lord there is mercy; and with him is plenteous redemption." Ps. 130:7. Wherefore, let the divine clemency and grace move thee to sincere and unfeigned repentance.

24. Secondly, the prophet declares that God is *merciful*. To be *merciful*, is to be easily moved by the miseries of another, and from the very heart to compassionate his case. This is to be seen in parents, who, not only with unfeigned tenderness love their children, but are at the same time so deeply touched with their misery and weakness, as to be willing even to die for them, if that were possible. Thus David, when he lamented the death of his son Absalom, mournfully exclaimed: "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!" 2 Sam. 18 : 33. But these bowels of mercy, this ardent, cordial, and tender affection, are infinitely more conspicuous in God himself, who, from an abounding sense of love and kindness, has given up his Son to death, and thereby transcended all the affections of earthly parents. This is declared by the prophet: "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee." Isa. 49 : 15. And by another, "Is Ephraim my dear son? is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still: therefore my bowels are troubled for him : I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord." Jer. 31 : 20. And again by another, "The Lord thy God is a merciful God; he will not forget the covenant of thy fathers, which he sware unto them." Deut. 4 : 31. And David confirms it: "The Lord is merciful and gracious." Ps. 103 : 8. And again, calling to mind this mercy, when of three punishments he had it in his power to choose which he pleased, he answered, "Let us fall now into the hand of the Lord; for

his mercies are great." 2 Sam. 24 : 14. Would to God that his paternal mercy might also allure us to unfeigned repentance! St. Paul himself refers to this most powerful inducement, when he beseeches us "by the *mercies* of God, etc." Rom. 12 : 1.

25. The third appellation given to God by the prophet is, that he is patient, or *slow to anger*. He is not easily moved to wrath; he suffers many provocations offered him, and gives time for repentance and conversion. All which he has abundantly evidenced by many real demonstrations, powerful enough to convince us, that even in God himself, "Love beareth all things, endureth all things" (1 Cor. 13 : 7), even as parents bear with their children. To this purpose says St. Peter, "The Lord is long suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." 2 Pet. 3 : 9. And again, "Account that the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation." 2 Pet. 3 : 15. And Paul wishes, that "the goodness of God may lead us to repentance." Rom. 2 : 4. To this long-suffering of God it was entirely due, that he granted the old world a hundred and twenty years in which to repent; bearing all that time with their provocations, and waiting for repentance. Gen. 6 : 3. And O! how much time hath he given us to repent in, and to work out our salvation! But this divine grace is abused by those who only grow more wanton by mercies, and "turn even the grace of God itself into lasciviousness." Jude, ver. 4. But by this they only hasten their ruin, and render more grievous the punishment which they deserve. If one, and then another of these many and provoking affronts, with which men offend an omnipotent God, were daily put upon a mere mortal, nothing certainly could be expected but the utmost severity of his resentment. How inconceivably great then must be the patience of God, who not only pardons offences so numerous and so heinous, but also returns all manner of kindness to the offender himself. O! that the inconceivable patience of the Lord might inspire us with a hatred of sin, and lead us all to repentance!

26. Fourthly, God is represented to be *of great kindness;* so great indeed, that no sin, how great soever, can surpass it. For as God is essentially and wholly good, so is he desirous to communicate himself wholly to men, provided they be willing to receive and admit him. Yea, by his nature he can be and do nothing but good. He takes a pleasure therein, and "rejoiceth over us to do us good." Jer. 32 : 41. His mercy is as great as himself, that is, infinite. It extends to all mankind. "Thy mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens." Ps. 36 : 5. "As the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him." Ps. 103 : 11. And we read in the Lamentations: "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not: they are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness." Lam. 3 : 22. See, therefore, O man! that a goodness so inexpressible be no longer abused, but that it animate thee to sincere repentance.

27. And lastly, the prophet says of the Lord, "*It repenteth him of the evil.*" This is as if he would say: "It is the nature of God, to punish with reluctance; and when he is even constrained thereto, it is not for our destruction, but salvation, that we be not "condemned with the world." 1 Cor. 11 : 32. He then doth "his strange

work" (of punishment), that he may bring to pass his own work (of mercy). Isa. 28 : 21. Thus he repented of the evil he had designed against Nineveh. Jonah 3 : 10. And, therefore, "it is good, that a man should both hope, and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord. For the Lord will not cast off for ever: but though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies. For he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men." Lam. 3 : 26, 31–33. Therefore, repent of thy sins.

28. For as soon as thou repentest of sin, and supplicatest the Lord in true faith, God will also repent of the punishment he intended to inflict. The words of the Lord to Jonah are very memorable: "Doest thou well to be angry for the gourd? Thou hast had pity on the gourd, for the which thou hast not labored, neither madest it grow, which came up in a night, and perished in a night: and should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than six score thousand persons?" Jonah 4: 9–11. This boundless mercy is still the same even at this day, and will continue so forever to penitent and returning sinners. Go, therefore, O man, and let this overflowing mercy of God lead thee to repentance!

CHAPTER X.

THE FOUR PROPERTIES OF TRUE REPENTANCE.

I have eaten ashes like bread, and mingled my drink with weeping, because of thine indignation and thy wrath: for thou hast lifted me up, and cast me down. My days are like a shadow that declineth; and I am withered like grass. But thou, O Lord, shalt endure for ever, and thy remembrance unto all generations.—Ps. 102 : 9, etc.

IN these words *four properties* of true repentance are enjoined on a sinner. The *first* is, *to account himself unworthy of all the mercies of God.* This is contained in these words: "I have eaten ashes like bread, and mingled my drink with weeping:" that is, There is nothing I can take any more delight in, and I account myself unworthy of any good or delicious fare. This, however pleasing it may be to the palate of others, is not more savory to me than mere ashes.—The same regard to our own unworthiness is thus inculcated by the Lord: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." Luke 9 : 23. And, "If any man come to me, and hate not his own life, he cannot be my disciple." Luke 14 : 26. Herein is expressed a threefold reference which a true Christian ought to have to his own unworthiness.

2. (*a*) *First* then, he is commanded to *deny himself:* that is, to die to self-will, to self-love, and self-honor, esteeming himself utterly unworthy of any of the benefits conferred by God on other men; or judging himself not "worthy of the least of all the mercies" of God (Gen. 32 : 10); and

reputing himself the most inconsiderable, not only of all men, but even of all other creatures; after the words of the Psalm: "I am a worm, and no man." Ps. 22 : 6. In this manner, for a man to despise himself, is truly to *deny himself.*

3. (*b*) He is commanded, *secondly,* to *hate himself;* that is, to condemn in himself whatever is pleasing and acceptable to the flesh; as honor, luxury, revenge, anger, avarice, and whatever else savors of the flesh. He is to crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts, and to abhor in himself its whole offspring, as the work of the devil himself, tending only to increase and nourish the perverse seed of original depravity. And such self-abhorrence in a sinner, will then of necessity be followed by pleading *guilty,* and by looking upon himself as one worthy of eternal death.

4. (*c*) The *third* lesson enjoined in these words, consists in *taking up the cross, and in following the Lord:* that is, that we, not with a morose and discontented, but with a ready mind, bear all manner of sufferings, and deem ourselves worthy, not only of these, but even of far more grievous afflictions. Thus Christ himself, whose example is set before us, "endured the cross, and despised the shame" (Heb. 12 : 2), thereby teaching us, that in "quietness and confidence shall be our strength." Isa. 30: 15. And all that is comprehended in the imitation of, or following after, Christ.

5. Upon the whole, these things make it appear, that a soul truly humble and penitent, thinks itself unworthy of all divine benefits, and even of daily food and refreshment. And this accords with the example of Christ himself, who, parched with thirst on the cross, and having vinegar given him mixed with gall, said no more, than, "It is finished." John 19 : 30. This was the reason also, that the true penitents under the old law judged themselves entirely unworthy of any good thing. They put sackcloth on their bodies, and sat in ashes. They satisfied their hunger with bread taken from the ashes, and quenched their thirst with water mingled with tears; as a testimony that they did not deserve any cleaner or better food, but merited rather to eat and to drink with their food, the very tears that trickled upon it.

6. Now the *cause* of this great self-abasement, was that profound sense with which they were affected, that, on account of their sin, they deserved an eternal curse and condemnation. This consideration lays the returning sinner very low. He deems himself utterly unworthy even of the least of the benefits of God. An illustration of this we have in Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan. When David was raised to the royal dignity, he called to mind the kindness of his friend Jonathan, who formerly had delivered him out of the hand of his father Saul; and commanding search to be made, whether there remained any of Jonathan's family, to whom he might make a suitable return of thanks; he at last found Mephibosheth, a lame and poor man, who, being ordered by David to eat bread at the king's table, bowed himself, and exclaimed: "What is thy servant, that thou shouldest look upon such a dead dog as I am?" 2 Sam. 9 : 8. This is a pattern, indeed, of a soul truly contrite in spirit and penitent in heart, and, therefore, sensible of both its own unworthiness, and of all the mercies bestowed on it by the Lord. And truly we may, with far greater reason, make use of

the same humble speech, whenever the Lord our God vouchsafes to us, as it were, the food of his own table, and in the Holy Supper gives us his body and blood to eat and drink.

7. In like manner does the Prodigal Son, after his repentance, express his sorrowful mind to his Father: "Father," says he, "I am no more worthy to be called thy son; make me as one of thy hired servants." Luke 15 : 19. The woman of Canaan was even content to be called a dog, if she were but permitted to "eat of the crumbs falling from the master's table." Matt. 15 : 27. Peter says to the Lord: "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man!" (Luke 5 : 8); that is, I am not worthy that thou shouldest have any further converse with me. And the centurion of Capernaum was of the same mind: "Lord," says he, "I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof." Matt. 8 : 8. So also St. Paul professes himself to be "not meet to be called an apostle" (1 Cor. 15 : 9): and declares, that he "counted not his life dear unto him, so that he might finish his course with joy." Acts 20 : 24. This inward sense of self-abasement David expresses when he speaks of "eating ashes like bread, and mingling his drink with weeping." If the heart of a Christian be brought to a sense of this vileness, then it is truly contrite and humble, and fit to be made a living sacrifice unto the Lord. Ps. 51 : 19.

8. A *second* property of true repentance, is, *to grieve at nothing so much as at the offences offered to God himself.* This is intimated in these words: "Because of thine indignation and thy wrath, for thou hast lifted me up, and cast me down." That is, Of all my other miseries and griefs, the greatest and most insupportable, is the sense I have of my having so heinously offended the infinitely good, holy, and righteous God.

9. Since God is nothing but love, grace, righteousness, goodness, and mercy, yea, the original source of all virtue, He must of necessity be offended with every sin committed by men; since the nature of sin is directly opposite to the nature of God. Thus by injustice, the justice of God is offended, he being justice itself. By lying, the truth of God is offended, he being truth itself. By hatred the love of God is offended, he being love itself. In a word, since God is the perfection of all virtue, goodness, and love, it can be no other than diabolical malice to offend such infinite goodness, such immense love, nay, *Love* itself. Had he at any time injured us, it might be no such great wonder, if we hated him, and offended him in our turn: but now, that he gives us nothing but what is good—soul, body, and life itself; that he feeds and clothes us; that he heals our body when it is sick; yea, pardons our sins when we pour out to him our souls; is ready to receive us into favor, as often as we return; now that he has given us his only Son with the Holy Spirit, yea, and Himself too, and adopted us into the number of his children: and having done all this for men, to be yet offended, opposed, and hated by them, is a madness, a malice altogether unaccountable and monstrous. Would it not be most wicked and impious to kill him who gave thee life; to beat and wound him, who kindly embraced and cherished thee in his bosom; to insult and affront him, who heaped honors and dignities upon thee; and to disown and reject him, who had chosen thee for his son? But all these, and far greater indignities, thou offerest to thy heavenly Fa-

ther, to the supreme, the righteous, the holy God, whom angels adore and fear, and whom seraphim worship with the acclamations of "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!" Isa. 6 : 3. And thou, who art but dust and ashes, art not afraid to offend him! If a penitent man earnestly calls to mind this monstrous sin, it is impossible but he must be affected with the keenest sorrow of heart, and feel the smart of his wounded conscience to equal and even exceed that of a wounded body. And there is all the reason in the world why it should be so. For hence must necessarily arise a dread and terror, *inwardly* threatening the conscience with wrath and judgment, and *outwardly* setting before it the approach of temporal calamities: whence a man, even as Job complains (ch. 6 : 1, etc.), finds no rest, takes no delight in anything, loathing even his meat and drink. These terrible pangs of conscience are described by David: "Thine arrows," says he, "stick fast in me: and thy hand presseth me sore." Ps. 38 : 2. For as a wound grievously smarts and grows worse whilst the arrow remains fixed in it; so also it is with the conscience, whilst the sting of sin and judgment is not taken away. And these lashes and clamors proceed from nothing but the sentence of divine justice proclaimed in the conscience, and the terrors of hell and death attending it. Therefore, David exclaims, "Thou hast lifted me up, and cast me down:" like one thrown down from a lofty rock into a low valley, who is so bruised and maimed, that not one sound limb remains.

10. But how terrible soever the fear of the judgments of God may prove to an awakened conscience, yet is there some ground of comfort; since the prophet tells us, that these arrows, these threats, these terrors, are the arrows and terrors of God himself. And it is God, who having thereby wounded and broken the heart, heals and restores it again. It is HE that killeth, and it is He that maketh alive; He boweth down, and He raiseth again (Ps. 146 : 8); He bringeth down to the grave, and He bringeth up again. 1 Sam. 2 : 6.

11. Whosoever, therefore, accounts and feels nothing to be more bitter and grievous, than to have offended *God*, the infinite Good, and Love itself; he only has experimentally learned the doctrine of contrition, and laid a firm foundation for sound and genuine godliness. This was one of David's acts of repentance: "Against THEE," says he, "Thee only, have I sinned." Ps. 51 : 4. As if he had said, "This is my anguish and sorrow, that I have offended THEE." And Daniel thus expresses himself: "Lord, righteousness belongeth unto THEE, but unto us, confusion of face," because we have offended so righteous a God. Dan. 9 : 7.

12. The *third* property of repentance is contained in these words: "My days are like a shadow that declineth; and I am withered like grass." That is, a heart truly penitent, is deeply sensible of its own weakness. It entirely despairs of its own strength and ability, knowing itself to be as destitute of life and power, as the very shadow; and as empty of spirit and moisture, as the grass that fadeth away. The same is affirmed in another Psalm: "Behold, thou hast made my days as a handbreadth, and mine age is as nothing before thee: verily, every man at his best state is altogether vanity." Ps. 39 : 5.

13. O! how noble a step would it be toward the attainment of substantial wisdom, were man but sensible of his own NOTHINGNESS! Man is nothing, as a shadow is nothing. As a shadow is without life, and without substance of itself, and vanishes at the departure of the sun; so is the condition of man, whenever the Lord withdraws the light of life from him! And it is worthy of observation, that, the nearer the sun is, the less are the shadows observed to be; and on the contrary, the farther the sun removes from us, the larger the shadows appear. The same happens to man: the more of God and his gifts is present with a good man, the less he esteems himself, the less he boasts of himself, and of what he calls *his*. On the contrary, the farther a man is removed from God, the greater he is in his own eyes; the more he is puffed up with his parts and abilities, the more he extends the bounds of his pride, and the less he knows how to keep within proper compass. Again, as shadows at the setting of the sun are greatest, though then just ready to disappear and vanish away; their greatness being but a forerunner of their approaching end; so it is with the shadows of this world, and the whole train of vain pomps and pleasures. They pass away suddenly when we are most lifted up by them. As the shadows vanish upon the withdrawing of the sun; so when an empty man becomes great in his own eyes, the divine sun sets upon him unexpectedly, and he returns to be *nothing*, even when he thought to be *something*. Moreover, as the shadow has no life of itself, but entirely moves with the motion of the sun, upon which it depends: so man of his own nature, is nothing but a body destitute of life and motion; and it is God alone who is able to put life and motion in it. The shadow of a tall and goodly tree moves not, except as the tree itself is moved; so man only liveth and moveth in God (Acts 17 : 28), of whom he is a shadow and reflected image. The hour of death will at length fully declare, that man's "days on the earth are as a shadow" (1 Chron. 29:15; Job 8:9), as a vain shew or image (Ps. 39 : 5); nay, as grass which grows up, but soon withereth when it is mown down: so fades our life away immediately, when it is cut down by the fatal scythe of death. Ps. 102:3, 11; Ps. 103:15. Lo! thus are our days consumed like smoke, and we are "gone like the shadow when it declineth." Ps. 109:23.

14. Now when a man by true humility is thoroughly persuaded of all this, and is convinced that he is nothing in the sight of God but a lifeless shadow, then, verily, his repentance is unfeigned, and his heart right before the Lord. And as it is appointed unto all men once to undergo a natural death, so ought all daily to die unto sin, that they may live unto God, and depart happily out of this mortal life, when all the shadows disappear. This daily dying to the world, as it is the best exercise, so it is also the best preparation for the hour of death; and if we earnestly practise the former, we shall then be fitted for undergoing the latter. That which we most frequently practise, becomes most perfect to us.

15. The *fourth* property of true repentance, is *union with God*, implied in these words: *But thou, O Lord, shalt endure forever, and thy remembrance unto all generations.* As if the prophet had said: "Though I am persuaded, that I am a perishing shadow, and wither like grass (Ps. 102 : 11), yet I am no less certain, that in *thee* I shall abide for ever; for thou thyself art eternal."

As by sin a man is divorced from God, so by true conversion, he is again united to him. Even as the Person of Christ is indivisible, and as the eternal Deity united the human nature in Christ Jesus with itself in so firm a bond, as is not to be dissolved by death itself (the humanity of Christ remaining in perpetual union with the Divinity, and with the glory therein residing): so, in the work of true conversion to God, penitent and believing souls are so closely and intimately united to God, that neither life nor death can separate them from him (Rom. 8:38): for "he that is joined to the Lord, is one spirit" (1 Cor. 6:17), God betrothing us unto himself forever. Hosea 2:19. In a word, Christ himself is our only Witness; and he is the Book of Life wherein we are plainly taught, that as his human nature abides eternally united with the divine, so all believers shall be eternally united with their Lord and Head, being *one spirit* with him. Now, as God is eternal, and Christ eternal; so the promises of God in Christ are also eternal and inviolable, he having made with us a covenant of everlasting grace. Ps. 111 : 5. Therefore, though a true Christian be forsaken of the world; be vexed and tormented by sin, death, hell, and the devil himself; nay, though even his own flesh and heart fail at last, and be wholly consumed, yet is God "the strength of his heart, and his portion for ever." Ps. 73 : 26.

CHAPTER XI.

SHOWING THAT THE FRUIT OF CONVERSION IS THE NEW CREATURE; ALSO, THAT THE CHRISTIAN IS, BY FAITH, A LORD OVER ALL, AND, BY LOVE, A SERVANT OF ALL; AND, THAT THE LIFE OF CHRIST IS A MIRROR FOR US.

If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.—2 Cor. 5 : 17.

ALL that are in Christ by faith, are "new creatures;" that is, they are the children of God, are righteous before God, have forgiveness of sin, and the Holy Ghost; they are partakers of the divine nature (2 Peter 1 : 4), are heirs of everlasting life, and are liberated in their consciences from the law, the curse, death, the devil, hell, and damnation. All, whatever appertains to their salvation, is in them begotten of Christ by grace, and is conceived by them through faith; hence, neither time nor place, neither law, nor commandment, nor ceremonies, nor anything whatsoever, can be any hindrance to them. They are made perfect in Christ, who is now become a vital principle in them, and they have in him the accomplishment of the law through faith. Rom. 10 : 4.

2. Thence the name of a *Christian* is a higher and more excellent name than all the names in the world. It is a greater name than is to be found in palaces and courts, a name above all posts of greatness, above the whole

world, with all that it contains. But, on the other hand, the name of a Christian is also the lowest name of all the names in the world, without exception. Thus, in the same degree, faith exalts a Christian *above all;* love brings down a Christian *under all.* This thou wilt then best understand, when thou seriously considerest the holy life of Christ; which is the brightest mirror both of love, and of all other virtues. See Phil. 2 : 5–8.

3. Behold how Christ made himself the servant of all! how humble was he in heart! how meek in spirit! how kind and gracious in words! how benevolent in his behavior! how merciful towards the poor! how compassionate towards the distressed! how patient towards his slanderers! how calm in his answers! how merciful towards sinners! Whom did he ever despise? whom did he ever revile, being reviled? How condescending was he to the very meanest! how ready to show acts of grace to all, without distinction! how heartily did he seek the salvation of all men, praying for his very enemies and murderers! Luke 23 : 34. How did he bear our sickness, sorrows, reproaches, stripes, wounds, and punishments! And indeed, what else is the life of Christ, but a most accomplished pattern of love, humility, patience, and all other virtues whatsoever! This we ought to look into, and to reflect upon it in our hearts; but especially when we are alone. This is better than all the high boasts of knowledge, and all the art and wisdom of the world. This life of Christ is like a seal (Cant. 8 : 6) to be stamped upon our hearts, and leave there the impression of his image, life, love, humility, patience, cross, reproach, and death. This would prove a true celestial light to our hearts, and a powerful means both to renew us in the inner man, and to transform us more and more into the divine image. Now as Christ was *under all* men, yea, under all creatures, in his state of *humiliation* in this world; but is now in his state of *exaltation*, a Lord *over all:* so a Christian is, with reference to his *faith*, a lord *over all*, nothing being excepted but God; but with regard to his *life* and conduct, a servant of servants, being *under all* persons and things.

CHAPTER XII.

SHOWING THAT CHRIST IS THE ONLY WAY AND END OF TRUE GODLINESS; AND THAT MAN GOES ASTRAY, WHEN GOD DOES NOT GUIDE AND DIRECT HIM.

Teach me thy way, O Lord: I will walk in thy truth; unite my heart to fear thy name.—Ps. 86 : 11.

THIS way is Christ. He says, "I am the way." John 14 : 6. But thou wilt here ask, How am I to come to him? The answer is: By *faith.* For *faith* unites us with Christ; *love* binds us fast; and *hope* upholds and sustains us while we walk in this way; that is, in the life of Christ. Yet at the same time, faith, hope, and love, all proceed from Christ himself, and

are his work in us. All these graces flow from him, and return to him. This way goes out from him, and leads back to him again.

2. Faith apprehends the Person of Christ, and his office; Love follows Christ in his life and conversation; Hope seizes on the glory that is hereafter to be revealed in Christ. *Faith* must have no other Christ, no other Redeemer, no other Saviour, no other Mediator and Way to life, but Jesus Christ only. *Love* sets before itself the one only life of Christ, as the most perfect and shining pattern to which to conform itself. *Hope* looks up steadfastly to Christ, as the glorious Captain of our salvation, keeping its eye fixed upon his everlasting kingdom above. This, *this* is the right *way;* this is the unerring truth, wherein we are to walk; and this is what is meant by *having the heart united, to fear the Lord's name.*

3. These three chief virtues are allied again to three other virtues. The alliance of faith, is with humility; of love, with patience; and of hope, with prayer. For he that believeth, humbleth himself; he that loveth, is patient; and he that hopeth, learns to pray, and boldly to approach the throne of grace. O how goodly and beautiful is this way! This is the way of God, the way of salvation, the path to glory, even our great Master's way! And may He himself teach us this way of truth, and inspire us with courage to walk in it! Where this frame of mind is, there the soul is firmly united to the fear of the Lord; and this is that *one thing* which David desired. Ps. 27 : 4. Such a one is resolved heartily to follow Christ in his humility and love, meekness and patience, expelling, through the lowliness of Christ, the venom of pride that lurks within. Consider how Christ thy Lord was made for thee a despicable worm (Ps. 22 : 6), and trampled upon by the basest of men! and by looking to him, learn to restrain thy haughty temper. In a word, let his humility slay thy *pride;* and do thou suppress the assaults of *covetousness*, by meditating on the poverty of Christ. Behold, he had not so much as even where to lay his head (Matt. 8 : 20), and how eager art thou to grasp in possession whatever thy unbounded desires fix themselves upon! Let the spirit of *envy* die, by the consideration of the overflowing love of Christ. He hath given thee life itself, and thou grudgest thy neighbor even a morsel of bread. Let the thirst for *revenge* be overcome in thy breast by the meekness of Christ. Behold! he prayed for his enemies (Luke 23 : 34); and thou dost not even pray for thy friends. His face being buffeted and spit upon by sinners, he quietly endured it; and thou canst hardly endure a severe look, or an unkind word from thy neighbor! Let the enticements to *lust* and voluptuousness be beaten down, by the agony and pains which thy Lord suffered in his holy body. Behold, and see, whether the sorrows of any man were ever like unto his sorrows! Lam. 1 : 12. This consideration will prove a check to the wanton lusts of thy flesh, and a curb to thy thirst after worldly pleasure. He wore a crown of thorns; and wouldest thou wear one of gold? He wept for the sins of others; and refusest thou to weep for thine own? He was a man of sorrows; and shouldest thou wish to be a man of pleasure?

CHAPTER XIII.

SHOWING THAT JESUS CHRIST IS THE TRUE BOOK OF LIFE, AND THAT HIS POVERTY TEACHES US TO DESPISE THE GLORY OF THE WORLD.

Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.—2 COR. 8:9.

ALL who believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, are written "in the book of life" (Phil. 4:3), or as the Lord expresses it, "in heaven." Luke 10:20. This shall be made manifest in that great day, when the Lord will "confess their names before his Father, and before his angels." Rev. 3:5. But besides this, the Lord Jesus himself is a most complete Book of a truly Christian life: he being, as the WORD and wisdom of the Father, made man, and come into the world to teach us by his life and death; and by his conduct and conversation, to set a pattern before us for our imitation.

2. The whole of his life, from his tender infancy to his death, was made up of nothing but a continual series of crosses and afflictions; insomuch that he took hardly any step without the inseparable attendance either of a pressing poverty, or of great contempt, or of most exquisite pains and sufferings: and into these three heads the entire extent of the life of Christ may be fitly resolved.

3. The poverty which the Lord endured, may be considered again under a threefold aspect. In the first place, he was poor in relation to outward things. This he himself declared: "The foxes," says he, "have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head." Matt. 8:20.

4. This indigence in worldly goods was attended by another, which was a poverty of friends. Nothing was more visible in his birth than meanness and poverty. He was born at Bethlehem, the least among the cities of Judah, and of a mother that was destitute of all wealth and worldly greatness. Luke 2:4, 7. Nor did he ever court the favor and friendship of the great and wealthy of this world. It is true, that Lazarus of Bethany was his friend, the Evangelist taking particular notice, that the Lord *loved him*, and thought him worthy of the title of his *friend* (John 11:3, 5, 11, 36); but this friendship was not founded on any worldly advantage which the Lord expected from him, but on that faith, whereby he was induced to believe, that Jesus was really the true Messiah.

5. The third degree of the Lord's poverty, was the state of his humiliation, whereby, laying aside the *form of God, he humbled himself, and made himself of no reputation.* Phil. 2:6, 7. He thereby entered into the depth of our misery. He was wearied in the journeys he undertook, when he "went about doing good" (Acts 10:38); but particularly, when he healed multitudes of sick and diseased, that continually crowded to him from all parts, and surrounded him often to that degree, that he could not so much as eat bread, and even his very friends thought him beside himself. Mark 3:20, 21. He fulfilled also what was said by the prophet, and is

repeated in the Gospel: "Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses" (Isa. 53:4; Matt. 8:17); never withdrawing from any hardship or approaching calamity, never shrinking under the burden of poverty, or cruel mockings, or unjust reproaches, or other evils, though they were sharp and numerous. And whereas he might have been served by all the creatures of God, and waited on by legions of angels, yet he dispensed with all this glory, and did not exert that sovereign power which he possessed. He suffered his head to be torn by thorns, his hands to be bound, his sacred body to be scourged, his hands and feet to be nailed to the cross, his side to be pierced with a spear. All this he freely allowed, though it was in his power to prevent it, and with one word to restrain all creatures from inflicting an injury on him.

6. In a word, for our sakes, he made himself subject to all creatures. He took upon him the form of a servant, that by his lowliness, he might repair our losses, and reinstate us in that sovereign dominion over all the creatures, which we had lost. He rose from the dead again, and gained a perfect conquest at last, thereby to purchase for us an everlasting victory. He suffered himself to be tempted by the devil (Matt. 4:1, 8), hurried about by his malice, tormented by his instruments, the Jews, fastened to the cross by their cruelty; and all this he underwent, in order to rescue mankind from the power of the devil and all his subordinate tools and agents.

7. Thus the Strongest became weak; the Almighty infirm; the most Glorious, became most despicable; the most Beautiful, most abhorred and hated; the most Exalted, most exposed himself to temptations of all kinds, to sufferings and difficulties, to pains and hardships. Hereby he designed to check and put to shame our sinful tenderness and effeminacy. We are, alas! so tender and delicate that the smallest cross is now complained of as an insufferable burden, and a little trouble and toil undergone for the sake of God and our neighbor, seems a sufficient plea why men should start back into the smooth way, and forsake the Lord; whereas he sends such trials upon men for the purpose of promoting thereby the recovery of their own souls, and the glory of his name.

8. Thus the Lord laid aside for a while the form of God. But this was not all. He did no less lay aside the use of the divine wisdom which resided in him. His conversation with others was plain and easy; and he behaved himself like a man *who had not learned letters*, as the Jews expressed it. John 7:15. He did not assume to himself the wonted formalities of a great doctor, or of an acute reasoner and disputer. Neither did he act like men that value themselves on account of their parts, skill, polite learning, and high descent. Nothing was more visible in his life and conduct than that quiet serenity of mind which he enjoyed in the midst of all the storms of the world. This was attended, however, by a divine power, an unaffected holiness of manners, an unfeigned charity, meekness, and humility. He made use of plain and easy terms when he "taught the way of God in truth" (Matt. 22:16); therefore he was despised by the proud Jews as an unlearned man. Thus the eternal WISDOM of God, speaking through the prophets of old, was cast aside as folly, and the true light of

souls rejected as deception: all which may serve to instruct us not to overvalue ourselves upon our parts and abilities; but to consider that they are not given us for the gratification of pride; and to employ them solely for advancing the glory of God, and the good of our fellow-creatures.

9. This simplicity of our Lord was manifested herein also, that he made no display of his glory and majesty. So great was his condescension, that he freely conversed with sinners. He did eat and drink with them; and this for no other reason, but to complete thereby the great work for which he was sent, which was, to "seek and to save that which was lost." Luke 19: 10. It was on this account that he was so grievously defamed with a multitude of odious names by his enemies, who called him "a gluttonous man, a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners" (Luke 7:34): and at another time, they exclaimed against him as a Samaritan, that had a devil. John 8: 48. And, at last, he suffered them to crucify him between two malefactors, as if he were the greatest criminal, whereas he then bore our transgressions.

10. Now he might have gained a greater repute than John himself, who, according to the Lord's own testimony, was a "burning and a shining light." John 5: 35. But he readily renounced any such honor, thereby to give a check to all superficial pretenders to piety, who are too apt to value themselves on account of an outward show of religion: though those that busy themselves so much about form and appearance, may have but little of the life and power of God within them.

11. In short, the Lord forsook all that is lofty and grand in the world. He was a king, and yet would be subject to kings and magistrates, nay, to Joseph and his mother, though they were so mean and indigent. "He went down with them to Nazareth, and was subject unto them." Luke 2: 51. He was Lord over all, and yet when he came into the world, "He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister" (Matt. 20: 28), clothing himself in the attire of poverty and meanness. He was the great and wise Prophet, and chose disciples of the lowest rank, plain and simple people. And when it was in his power to behave himself as a Lord and Master in the small company of his followers, yet did he even there divest himself of that right, being "among them as one that serveth." Luke 22: 27. He assumed no lordlike air over them, but chose rather to be a master in life and doctrine, than to have any other distinguishing character of grandeur and pre-eminence. Thus when he taught the duty of obedience, he showed at the same time a pattern of obedience in his own conduct. When he endeavored to instil into his disciples a sense of humility, of patience, of subjection to their superiors, and of other Christian virtues; he practised them first himself, that so his own example might have the greater influence upon the lives of others. Being Head and Master, he thought it becoming his character to be chief also in bearing affronts, reproaches, injuries, poverty, misery, and in performing the most humble services, even such as that of washing his disciples' feet. John 13: 5. Thus he proved a Master, Head, and Teacher, not in doctrine only; but in life, in example, and practice.

12. Alas! how great is our folly! Our Head despised worldly honor,

and lo! we are in pursuit of it. He submitted to crosses and trials, and we shrink back at the sight of them. He became obedient unto death; and we seek liberty, so that we may follow our own will. But this does not agree with the example which the Lord has set before us, nor with the spiritual maxims contained in the Book of Life, which he has left us for imitation.

13. Consider, therefore, O man, whether the way wherein thou walkest agrees with that excellent way wherein thy Lord and Master walked himself. If thou despisest the narrow way of Jesus, and followest the way of the world, then know certainly that thy way, though smooth and pleasing for a while, will end in utter destruction at last! And thus the first part of Christ's life of sorrow and poverty has been described.

CHAPTER XIV.

SHOWING HOW CHRIST, BY THE SHAME AND CONTEMPT WHICH HE ENDURED, AND BY HIS SELF-DENIAL, TEACHES US TO DESPISE THE HONOR AND GLORY OF THE WORLD.

He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.—Isa. 53 : 3.

THE second head of the life of poverty of Christ, is the contempt which he endured from the world. After thou hast read over and seriously considered the lesson of *poverty* exhibited by the Lord, take also a view of the deep and unaffected *humility*, which was so eminently seen in his whole life and conduct. Never did he catch at the applause of men; never was he actuated by ambition, or any thirst after temporal honor and greatness: on the contrary, whenever men offered to bestow honors and praises upon him, he refused them, both by word and by deed: never did he accept of any honor from men; nay, not even when "they would take him by force to make him a king." John 6 : 15. On the other hand, with what inexpressible humility did he bear all the insults, the reproaches, and calumnies with which his enemies loaded him? He was execrated as a Samaritan, and his miracles were maliciously ascribed to the power of Beelzebub. John 8:48; Matt. 12 : 24. The sound doctrine which he brought down from heaven, was denounced as blasphemy; and he who taught it, was everywhere insulted by foul and uncharitable censures, and such base lies and slanders as the malice of men could contrive. He was betrayed and sold; he was denied and buffeted; he was spit upon and crowned with thorns; he was derided and scourged; he was smitten, and sentenced to death; he was rejected, and condemned to undergo the ignominious "death of the cross." Phil. 2 : 8. He was forsaken by God and men; and, in fine, being stripped of all, was executed in the midst of scandalous malefactors, hanging on the tree like one accursed. Gal. 3 : 13. He was made the common gazing-stock of all his enemies, and derided by all.

His prayers were turned into ridicule; his garments were parted by lot; and at the approach of the very pangs of death, he had nothing wherewith to refresh himself but vinegar mingled with gall. Matt. 27:34. At last, when all was finished, he expired on the cross, amid the reproaches, hatred, and indignation of the world; his body was pierced with a spear, and he made his grave with the wicked. John 19 : 34; Isa. 53 : 9. Nay, his enemies continued to fume with rage and malice, even now when he had given up the ghost; and called him a deceiver. Matt. 27 : 63. Being risen at last from the dead, and triumphing over his enemies; they boldly denied the truth of his resurrection. Thus was the Lord, in the beginning, progress, and end of his ever-blessed life, "despised and rejected, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief."

2. In the course of our Lord's life, there is not only displayed to us the abounding treasure of redemption gained by Christ; but it is also most clearly demonstrated, that in this scene of suffering, he is our great teacher and master, our prophet and shepherd, our instructor, light, and constant monitor; that also we, by looking unto him, may learn to despise earthly pomp and greatness; and by closely adhering to him, like true members to their head, "grow up into him in all things" (Ephes. 4 : 15), being rendered conformable unto his life, "and rooted and grounded in his love." Ephes. 3 : 17.

3. But when our lives are contrary to the life of him who is designed to be our Head; when in our actions, words, and endeavors, we do not entirely aim at God's glory, but our own; it is more than evident, that Christ does not live in us, but rather the prince of this world. It is then plain, that we have not yet learned to love Christ, and that we are not yet loose from the various ties of this world; for "whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the world" (1 John 5 : 4); and so of course is not overcome by it. Nor does such a one any longer love the world; for "if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 John 2 : 15); and consequently, that of Christ must be absent likewise. For the whole life of Christ teaches us how to die unto the world. Consider then the beginning, together with the progress and conclusion of his life, and remember the profound HUMILITY with which he bore the contempt and reproaches of all those that love the world.

CHAPTER XV.

SHOWING HOW WE SHOULD, THROUGH CHRIST, BEAR AND OVERCOME THE TRIALS AND CONTEMPT OF THE WORLD.

Consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.—Heb. 12 : 3.

IT is a most moving complaint uttered by the Messiah: "I became a reproach unto them; when they looked upon me, they shaked their heads. Help me, O Lord my God; O save me according to thy mercy; that they may know that this is thy hand; that thou Lord hast done it. Let them curse, but bless thou; when they arise, let them be ashamed; but let thy servant rejoice. Let mine adversaries be clothed with shame; and let them cover themselves with their own confusion as with a mantle. I will greatly praise the Lord with my mouth; yea, I will praise him among the multitude. For he shall stand at the right hand of the poor, to save him from those that condemn his soul." Ps. 109 : 25–31.

2. This pathetic complaint of the Lord our Redeemer, every Christian ought to represent to himself as a mirror, in which to behold the life of Christ under the cross, together with that of all the saints in general. This way of the cross has been copiously set forth in the Book of Psalms, in order to render it the more familiar to us, and to teach us betimes, that "we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God." Acts 14 : 22. Such a consideration gives present ease and comfort under the contempt and reproaches incident to the true followers of Christ, and accustoms them to a conformity to the image of Christ (Rom. 8 : 29): which as it is one of the greatest honors our Master bestows on his disciples; so it is by the world abhorred and loathed, just as a healing medicine is by a distempered and delicate palate. This conformity is, however, the grand duty of a Christian, inuring him to bear his Master's reproach (Heb. 13 : 13) and abject image in time, that he may also hereafter bear his glorious image in eternity. Phil. 3 : 21.

3. Now, as the 109th Psalm abovementioned, contains a prayer of Christ poured out in the midst of his sufferings; so it mentions, in the latter part, three kinds of trouble more particularly, with which the Lord found himself oppressed.

4. In the first place, the Lord complaineth of a vehement anxiety of heart, declared in this manner: "I am poor and needy, and my heart is wounded within me." Ver. 22. Behold, what complaints this holy, this eminent Person is reduced to! And what is the reason of them? Surely, to acquaint us in the most affectionate terms, with all that he hath suffered for our sake. He says, "I am poor;" and lo! thou toilest to get estates, to hoard up riches; and yet when thou hast them, thou art still poor and discontented in the possession of them. He says, "I am needy;" and thou, O man, art entirely bent upon thy ease, prosperity, and fulness of bread! He

complains, "my heart is wounded within me;" how unreasonable is it then, O man! that thou shouldest desire to be humored and gratified in all thy vain and carnal propensities! Now, if nothing will awaken in thee a love of the cross of Christ, let at least the consideration of the sacredness of the afflicted Person, infinitely exalted above thee, work thee into a ready compliance with his life. Such a consideration will give thee ease and patience under any grief that may attend thee, and make thee relish better those pure and untainted pleasures which will succeed the cross. Therefore, think with thyself in this manner: "I am now put to trouble and anxiety of heart; but the same befell also my Lord and Master, whose very soul was surrounded with sorrows so heavy and acute, with pains so great, that nothing of what I shall ever undergo can equal them." However, the Lord, after his sufferings, entered into everlasting joy; after contempt, into never-fading glory; through death into life; and through hell into heaven. And thus will it be with the sincere followers of the Lord, to whom their crosses will prove but as so many advances to a more excellent glory, and their affliction will be the avenue to everlasting bliss and happiness.

5. The Lord continues his complaint thus: "I am gone like the shadow when it declineth: I am tossed up and down as the locust. My knees are weak through fasting; and my flesh faileth of fatness." Ps. 109:23, 24. A most expressive description of the common frailty of human nature! What is a shadow, but a mere nothing, an empty lifeless appearance? To such an abject lowliness, to such an inconceivable degree of humiliation, the Lord suffered himself to be reduced whilst he dwelt among us! He who is life and light itself, and the bottomless fountain of life and happiness, is exposed to labor and infirmities; and should not men hereby learn so much humility at least, as to think themselves far more emphatically as shadows, or as nothing, than the Lord of life himself? At the same time, it is to be remembered that the Lord here refers to his state of humiliation alone, for, in his own glory he is our Lord and our life. He says, "I am tossed up and down as the locust." The Lord had no settled habitation upon earth, as men of the world have. He was in a constant pilgrimage towards that kingdom which cannot be moved. For this reason he is said to have only *dwelt or tabernacled* among us (John 1:14), and is here compared to a locust, which having no abiding place, is fearful, and tossed to and fro with every wind. Nahum 3:17; Exod. 10:19. And even in this our blessed Saviour has left us a pattern, to walk as he walked; and since we have no continuing city here, to seek one to come, which "hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." Heb. 11:10. What is farther added of the weakness of his knees, and the failing of his flesh, abundantly appeared about the time of his passion, when his "strength was dried up like a potsherd" (Ps. 22:15); and this may be a monitor to us under bodily diseases and infirmities. Should we complain of a fit of sickness, when the Lord of life pined away into weakness, and languished in misery? What matters it, how languid, weak, and neglected our body be, if our soul and spiritual life be but vigorous and sound? The soul ought to "eat that which is good, and delight itself in spiritual fatness" (Isa. 55:2), that so it may grow "strong in the

Lord, and in the power of his might." Ephes. 6 : 10.

6. Thirdly, the Lord complains of the great contempt he underwent in this world, in order to stop us in our pursuit after vain honor, pride, and self-esteem. "I became," says he, "a reproach unto them: when they looked upon me they shaked their heads." What indignity is there like unto this! But the Anointed of the Lord endured it all for no other end, than to rescue mankind from eternal scorn and infamy; for man having become a scorner and hater of God, Christ was designed to make atonement for so heinous a sin, by the extreme contempt which he willingly endured. However, as the Lord by his humble submission to the contempt of the world, has laid a mighty obligation on all Christians to be his followers therein; so the considerations here annexed, may be of use for supporting a man under sufferings of that nature.

7. First consider, that in bearing the contempt of the world, thou bearest no less than the very image of Christ, and followest him who is thy Head and Master. Rom. 8 : 17.

8. (2) To be contemned and disrespectfully used by the world, is of great efficacy for improving thyself in true humility; a virtue which finds favor with God. "For God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble." 1 Peter 5 : 5.

9. (3) Thy suffering of reproaches for the sake of truth, is an evidence that thou art ranked with that cloud of witnesses, who in all ages have been made "as the filth of the world, and the offscouring of all things," and so continue to be esteemed "unto this day." 1 Cor. 4 : 13.

10. (4) Remember that those that are come out "of great tribulation, shall be before the throne of God" at last (Rev. 7 : 14), and be there "confessed before the angels of God." Luke 12 : 8; 1 Cor. 4 : 5.

11. (5) Of what consequence is it how contemptuously the world uses thee, since thou art not to rise in the last day (as many shall), "to shame and everlasting contempt" (Dan. 12 : 2), (the Lord having redeemed thee from that), but to honor and glory!

12. (6) Remember that God does not withhold his grace from thee in this world. When the world frowns, God favors. When men withdraw their kindness, then God confers his mercy. For this purpose the Psalmist prays: "Help me, O Lord my God: O save me according to thy mercy; that they may know that this is thy hand, and that thou, Lord, hast done it." Ps. 109 : 26, 27. That is to say: As the Lord removed at last his Son from the cross, from all the labors of his soul, from all the insults of his enemies, and crowned him with glory in heaven; so will he deal with thee also, if thou continuest faithful in bearing the cross, and all the injuries of a profane world. All shall see and shall know, that it is the Lord's hand that hath done it.

13. (7) It was God himself who suffered his beloved Son to be thus contemned, reproached, and reviled, according to the words of the Psalm: "Because for thy sake I have borne reproach; shame hath covered my face." Ps. 69 : 7. Remember, therefore, that the same God, who gave a bitter cup to his dear Son, hath also allotted thee thy trials, to humble thee, and to know what is in thy heart.

14. (8) Be sure that the Lord will change all the undeserved reproaches thrown upon thee, into so many bless-

ings, and in his own time pour shame and confusion upon the scoffers. This is expressed in the following verse: "Let them curse, but bless thou: when they arise, let them be ashamed; but let thy servant rejoice." Ps. 109: 28. Nay, if the wicked curse ever so much, yet "shall the curse causeless never come" (Prov. 26 : 2), as plainly appears from Balaam's attempt, who could not "curse, whom God had not cursed." Numb. 23 : 8. Whereas, whosoever feareth the Lord, it shall go well with him at the last, and he shall find favor in the day of his death. The same blessing is bestowed on Abraham, and on all those that walk in the steps of his faith: "I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee." Gen. 12 : 3. And in another place we have this encouragement: "Fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings." Isa. 51 : 7. And our Redeemer himself hath declared: "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you." Matt. 5 : 11. And his apostle says: "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you." 1 Pet. 4 : 14.

15. (9) The Lord goes on in the aforesaid Psalm: "I will greatly praise the Lord with my mouth; yea, I will praise him among the multitude." Ps. 109 : 30. Christ now returns thanks to his heavenly Father for the very crosses and reproaches that were allotted him. This is the temper of every sincere Christian. He is thankful in the midst of afflictions and reproaches, particularly when he looks on the hand of that kind Father who entails all this upon him, but who also delivers him. And truly, the Lord never inflicts a judgment on any soul, but he affords at the same time sufficient reason for thanking and blessing him for that affliction. Thus is gratitude the happy product of crosses and trials. And this consideration is fit to sweeten the duty of resignation to the will of God. He that for the love of Christ readily submits to the contempt of a vain world, shall be honored by God again, both in this world and in the world to come. There is a time, wherein the Lord "raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill; that he may set him with princes, even with the princes of his people." Ps. 113 : 7. Surely, it argues an excellent spirit, when a man for Christ's sake bears the insults of the wicked, and maintains an unshaken calmness of mind, in the midst of all the calumnies of the world. This is "the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which in the sight of God is of great price." 1 Pet. 3 : 4.

16. (10) The Psalm concludes, "For he shall stand at the right hand of the poor, to save him from those that condemn his soul." Ps. 109 : 31. Here is comfort sufficient to make a Christian bear up against the hardships and reproaches he is exposed to in his warfare. It is never said that the Lord will stand at the right hand of the violent and great ones, of the oppressors and persecutors; but he will stand at the right hand of the poor, who being destitute of the arm or support of men, flee to the Lord alone for help and refuge, as to the sole object of their faith and trust. Those are "remembered, when he maketh inquisition for blood" (Ps. 9 : 12); and those are the afflicted, or the humble, "whose cry the Lord doth not forget." Tertullian tells us, "We are then absolved by God, when the world condemns us." For though "the wicked

watcheth the righteous, and seeketh to slay him; yet will the Lord not leave him in his hand, nor condemn him when he is judged." Ps. 37 : 32, 33. Thus will the Lord attend thee, O man! with a wonderful deliverance, and afford thee reason enough to extol his name among many, for his marvellous kindness. David himself "had fainted, unless he had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait, therefore, on the Lord; be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord." Ps. 27 : 13, 14. "Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the heart: and then shall every man have praise of God." 1 Cor. 4 : 5.

CHAPTER XVI.

SHOWING HOW CHRISTIANS ARE TO SEEK AND OBTAIN FAVOR AND GLORY THROUGH CHRIST, IN HEAVEN.

Hold not thy peace, O God of my praise, etc.—Ps. 109 : 1, etc

THIS is a prayer of the eternal Son of God. The purport or substance of this prayer, may be more fully expressed in this manner:

"My Heavenly Father! thou knowest that in this world I have not sought my own glory, but the glory of thy holy name, and the salvation of all men: and therefore am I so bitterly persecuted, blasphemed, contemned, and vilified. Nevertheless, this is my comfort, that thou art my Father, and that I am thy only begotten Son: lo! this is my glory, in heaven with thee. And this my glory wilt thou in due time manifest and bring to light; that by thy glorifying of me, the world may see who it is whom they have blasphemed and persecuted." John 12 : 28.

2. Hence we are to learn, that such have the greatest glory and praise in heaven, who in this world are the most persecuted for righteousness' sake. This we may gather from the example of our Lord himself. From him, the true Book of Life, we may learn true wisdom. But that we may the better understand that his example and holy life are our Book of Life, let us carefully observe the following considerations: (1) Christ never sought upon earth his own glory in anything, but accounted it sufficient for him, that God alone was his glory. So let us, in like manner, reject the empty glory and praises of this world, in whatever we do; endeavoring only that God be glorified in us, saying, "Ah, Lord God! give us also such a heart, even the heart of Christ thy Son, that we may have our glory in *Thee* alone, and not in *ourselves;* that we may have our glory in heaven, and not upon earth."

3. (2) It was the highest glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, that he was the only begotten Son of God. And for this reason did the world persecute, vilify, and blaspheme him. Here let

our prayer be like this: "Grant us also, Holy Father, that we may count it our greatest glory and joy, that we are thy children; that so we may also obtain the eternal enjoyment of thy love and promise, and may, by virtue of our adoption, come to possess in thee an everlasting inheritance. Remind us, also, that if the world hate, envy, reproach, and persecute us, it has done the same to thy dear and holy child Jesus."

4. (3) It is the glory of the Lord Jesus, that he wrought so many divine works, that he went about continually doing the most wondrous acts of grace and beneficence to mankind: and that he did this from pure love only, and from the highest compassion for the miseries of fallen nature; although he received nothing but hatred and most heinous ingratitude in return. "Grant us, blessed God, grateful and faithful hearts, so that we may be always ready to do good to as many as we possibly can; and that we may never be deterred from acts of charity, by the unthankfulness of the world, ascribing not to ourselves, but to thy name only, the glory of all that we do."

5. (4) It is the highest glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, that out of pure love, he laid down his life for us; that he purchased us with his own blood; that he was obedient to the Father, even unto death; that with the greatest meekness he endured the vilest reproach; and with the utmost patience, bore the pains of the cross. "O God, our glory, help us, that we may also overcome our enemy with love; that we may subdue our flesh with godly obedience; bear the reproach of the world with the meekness and long suffering of Christ; obtain the victory through patience; and being thus made strong in the Lord, be more than conquerors through him that loved us!"

6. (5) The highest glory of the blessed Jesus, is his exaltation to the right hand of God, and the name given him, which is "above every name; that, at the name of Jesus, every knee, both in heaven and in earth, should bow, and all tongues confess him to be their Lord." Phil. 2:9-11. "Help, O gracious God! that we may esteem it our highest glory to be made conformable to our ever-blessed Head and Saviour; that so when he shall hereafter appear in power and majesty, we also may appear with him in glory, after we have here endured the contempt of the world, and continued faithful to the end, when every man shall have praise of God." 1 Cor. 4:5; 2 Cor. 4:17.

7. (6) The glory of Christ the Lord is, that he is the only Head of his Church in general, and of every member thereof in particular; a glorious King of his people; and an everlasting High priest, making intercession for us. "Help us with thy grace, O God most gracious, that we may evermore account it our greatest glory, that we are members of thy Son, and subjects of his kingdom, and that we may enjoy all the privileges and benefits purchased by his high-priestly intercession, sacrifice, and benediction."

8. (7) Another branch of the glory of Christ is, that God has most wonderfully displayed and magnified his name throughout the whole world: and has (in opposition to all his enemies, blasphemers, and persecutors, who would not own him to be the Son of God), in the most public and solemn manner attested his cause, declared him to be his Son by mighty signs and wonders, and established faith in

his name amongst many nations and languages. Notwithstanding that God held his peace for a while, and vailed the glory of his Son under the mystery of the cross; yet did it break forth the more gloriously like the sun. For, "out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined. Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence." For though God, who is our glory, may seem now and then to be silent, and to hold his peace when we are insulted and persecuted; yet is there nothing more certain, than that after the short hour of probation, he will no longer keep silence, but with a high hand deliver us from the reproach which we suffered, and "remove his stroke away from us," that we may rejoice in his salvation. Ps. 39 : 10. However, "it doth not yet appear what we shall then be." 1 John 3 : 2.

9. The conclusion of the whole is this: It is God alone who is to be *our glory;* it is not the world, nor wealth, nor honor, nor greatness, nor the arm of flesh, that I may call my glory; but God, and only God, is my glory! Wherefore, "let not the wise man glory in his wisdom" (as it is written), "neither let the mighty man glory in his might, nor let the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord." Jer. 9 : 23, 24; 1 Cor. 1 : 31.

CHAPTER XVII.

SHOWING HOW WE MAY THROUGH CHRIST, AND AFTER THE EXAMPLE OF ALL THE SAINTS, OVERCOME THE CALUMNIES OF MEN.

Mine enemies reproach me all the day, and they that are mad against me are sworn against me.—Ps. 102 : 8.

AMONG the many crosses and troubles of a Christian, a false and slanderous tongue is none of the least, as we may evidently see, from the example of Christ himself, whom the Pharisees, with their envenomed tongues, both in his life and at his death, did most maliciously sting.

2. Herein the Lord left a pattern of patience to every Christian, who must not think to escape, since the great Master himself was wounded by malicious tongues. The more conformable any one is to Christ, and the more zealously he follows Christ's steps, the more is he also insulted by false and deceitful tongues. This plainly appears from the example of holy David, who was tormented by slanderers, as he himself complains in the following Psalms: 3, 4, 10, 12, 15, 31, 50, 52, 55, 58, 64, 69, 102, 120, and 140. Indeed, there is no one of the prophets of old who did not have these deadly arrows shot against him by murderous tongues; for "their tongue is an arrow shot out: he speaks peaceably to his neighbor with his mouth, but in heart he layeth his wait." Jer. 9 : 8. All honest hearts ought, therefore, to beware of backbiters. As he that toucheth a man infected with leprosy, or any infectious distemper, must expect to be

so infected; so he that gives ear to lying tongues, too often catches the same distemper.

3. Now, since a Christian is forbidden to retort evil for evil (Rom. 12: 17; Matt. 5: 39), (this agreeing in no wise with the Christian faith); there is no other counsel left, but that by a conscience void of offence, he derives his comfort from those divine oracles with which the Lord has furnished him for that purpose.

4. (1) Let thy first comfort be the example of Christ and of all the saints. It fares no worse with us in this respect, than with Christ our Head, and with all that have ever been most dear to him. Nothing of this kind has befallen us, which has not been before in all ages undergone by his followers. And since the examples of others have generally a strong influence on our lives, and readily suggest themselves to our remembrance in time of trouble; we ought, therefore, to improve all those instances into an encouragement to bear our treatment with patience, for the sake of the joy that usually springs up from the reproach of the cross. Look then upon the Prince of thy salvation, look upon the lives of all the saints of old, those who have been the greatest lights in their generation. Consider the example of Moses, who esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt (Heb. 11:26), and who, by reason of the continual contradictions he underwent, is said to have been a man meek, or afflicted, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth. Numb. 12:3. And what shall we say of David? He was truly, in his time, the very mark, as it were, at which all the false tongues in the land shot their murderous arrows. "Mine enemies," said he, "revile me all the day long: and they that are mad against me, are sworn together against me." Ps. 102: 8. They affronted him daily with the reproach of his misery, turning him, as it were, into a proverb, and offering him the most heinous indignity that can be offered to a man. What shall we say of Job? How was he upbraided by his friends, and grieved with their tongues! And how fell Daniel, that holy prophet, into an open sepulchre, yea, into a den of lions! Yet how powerfully did the Lord rescue Moses, Job, and Daniel! All these are gone before thee, and their examples, if duly considered, will excite in thee a spirit of holy emulation, and draw thee into the same way of the cross by which they entered into the kingdom of God. Acts 14: 22. Behold, thy Lord Jesus goeth before thee, pursued with the curses and revilings of the Pharisees! There goeth Moses before, and the faction of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, following behind, with execrations in their mouths, and stones in their hands, to rid themselves of him! Numb. 16. There is David in sore trials, and Shimei behind, cursing his king! 2 Sam. 16:5. And there are the apostles of our Lord, and an unbelieving multitude behind, stopping their ears, and running madly upon them.

5. (2) It is not enough, however, slightly and superficially to reflect on the example of the saints; but we must learn also to be *followers* of them, when we are tried as they were, and in every tribulation copy after their meekness and patience. How shall meekness appear, or how shall patience be exercised, if thou be not contradicted; or if there be none

to deride, slander, or vilify thee? Thou must, therefore, patiently take up thy cross with them, and meekly follow the Lord Christ in his steps. Thou art called to *suffer* with thy Saviour, and not to avenge thyself, not to return evil for evil, not to revile again being reviled, not to threaten being slandered, but quietly to commit thy cause "to him that judgeth righteously." 1 Pet. 2:23. Evil tongues must give an account in the day of judgment of every *idle* word which they have spoken. Matt. 12:36. And this will at the last day prove a burden heavy enough. Leave all, therefore, to the Lord, to do as he pleaseth, who will not fail to do right. Recompense and vengeance belong to him alone. Deut. 32:35. Fix thine eye on the Lord Jesus: "He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he was brought as a lamb to the slaughter; and as a sheep before his shearers is dumb, so opened he not his mouth." Isa. 53:7.

6. (3) From the examples of the saints, we are, in the next place, to learn a sovereign remedy, which they made use of against the venom of evil tongues. This is *prayer*. They prayed, and so they were healed and comforted. When they were bitterly cursed by their adversaries, they sent up only their cry to God, saying: "Let them curse; but bless thou." Ps. 109:28; Luke 6:28. Consider the whole Book of Psalms throughout. How did David defend himself with prayer, as with a wall of iron, against false tongues! They are all foolish marksmen, who bend their bow against the innocent; and draw the sword to slay such as are of a right conversation: for their lies and slanders shall return at last upon their own heads, and shall enter into their own bowels; as it is written: "Their sword shall enter into their own heart, and their bows shall be broken." Ps. 37:15. All this can be obtained by prayer. Whenever any one prays earnestly against an evil speaker or a liar, it is as if he wrestled and fought with him; even as David wrestled with Goliah (1 Sam. 17:48, 49), or as Moses contended with the Egyptian sorcerers. Ex. 7:12. Here two spirits fight with each other; that is, the prayer of faith proceeding from the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth; and the spirit of lies proceeding from the devil, the father of lies. But all these devilish serpents of the Egyptians shall eventually be subdued, and, as it were, swallowed up by the divine rod of Moses; that is, by prayer.

7. (4) Another remedy against the poison of a wicked tongue, is the frequent *reading and meditating upon the Word of God*. This is an excellent means of consolation and refreshment, whenever a soul is insulted and pursued by enemies. An upright heart hunted by men of falsehood and malice, is like a hart, whose thirst increases by being hunted; and as this pants after the water brooks (Ps. 42:1), so must a soul in affliction long after the cooling streams of the divine Word, and thirst for the living waters of grace, thereby to be quickened and refreshed. For by this word of grace the Lord revives a drooping soul, speaking to her in a kind and gracious manner. "Blessed are ye," says our Master, "when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely. Rejoice and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."

Matt. 5 : 11, 12. In this saying of our Lord, there is a threefold ground of comfort. 1. Blessed are ye. 2. Rejoice. 3. Great is your reward. Who would not be willing, for the sake of so great and endless a good, to endure here reproach and persecution for a short period? Yea, who would not even rejoice, since he is made by this means a partaker of Christ's sufferings, in order, "that when the glory of Christ shall be revealed," he may also partake with his Lord in that joy? "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye, for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you." 1 Pet. 4 : 13, 14. Remember also, that "it is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth;" that he "sit alone and keep silence," when he hath anything laid upon him to bear; yea, that he "put his mouth in the dust," and wait in hope; and that he "give his cheek to him that smiteth him," when he is "filled full with reproach. For the Lord will not cast off for ever." Lam. 3 : 27–31.

8. (5) Thou art further to learn, that such calumny is a hellish storm, which soon rises, and soon blows over. As a traveller is not disheartened at any tempestuous weather he is liable to meet with upon the road, but provides himself the more against it: so let the spiritual pilgrim never be cast down by storms and tempests; but let him go on in hope, and continue faithful to the end of his journey. This has been uniformly the state of the true church. "O thou afflicted," says the prophet, "tossed with tempest, and not comforted!" Isaiah 54 : 11. Is it a "strange" thing that has happened unto thee? 1 Pet. 4 : 12. What is more common to a traveller, than to be overtaken by foul and stormy weather? A persevering diligence will, notwithstanding, bring him home at last. The world makes every one a gazing-stock, that looks with concern upon the vain follies of men, and drops a serious word in favor of virtue. What is to-day the fate of one good Christian, may to-morrow be the fate of another, according as the humor of the world works, which allows no one to pass uncensured that is not in league with it. The best method a Christian can adopt in all these storms, is to be quiet under them, and to keep his mind free from anger and bitterness. He that considers every hard word to be a stain on his character, which ought to be wiped off, will by so doing only render things worse. Hence it remains, that the most effectual way to stop the fury of slanderous tongues, is to yield to it for the present, and patiently wait till time itself shall set things in a better light. He that will dispute every thing at the sword's point, as it were, is like a man that is stung by a bee, and being thereby put in a passion, runs headlong upon the whole hive in order to be revenged, by turning it upside down. Had he not better have borne it, than feel the smart which must attend an attempt so rash? The fire of malicious tongues burns the more fiercely when we seek to quench it by too hasty efforts. An evil tongue is like that serpent called the Hydra, which, as some tell us, brought forth seven other heads when, in order to destroy it, you cut off one. Thus a wicked tongue is so far from being restrained by contradiction, that it spreads the farther by it, and broaches seven lies instead of one. Whereas he that is deaf to popular rumors, and is not easily alarmed at every little noise, will not only better repel the darts of wicked tongues, but enjoy also an unshaken tranquillity

both of soul and body. This is a truly noble method to overcome the worst of our enemies. He that rejects this heroic meekness of soul, sets himself entirely out of God's protection, and whilst he eagerly endeavors to save his name and reputation, must be the more harassed by the perpetual alarms of malignant tongues.

9. (6) Besides this, there are some other particular reasons, why the Lord permits his children to be persecuted by virulent tongues. When David in his sore troubles was cursed by Shimei, he said no more than, "Let him curse; for the Lord hath bidden him." 2 Sam. 16:11. And what other reason can be assigned for this, but that the Lord hereby seeks to preserve his children from exalting themselves above measure, on account of such eminent gifts as have been conferred upon them; and that they may at the same time improve themselves in the practice of mutual love, mildness, and humility? What is said by David of Shimei, namely, that he was bidden to curse his king, is expressed by Job in more general terms: "He poureth contempt upon princes." Job 12 : 21. Now, who is able to fathom all the mysterious depths of divine judgments? The carnal mind by no means likes to be reviled, insulted, or undervalued. Pride and self-love so naturally adhere to us, that they taint all our works and actions. Every one loves to be extolled, and to be made much of, to be esteemed and admired. Alas! it is this natural self-love, which having once led man astray, now propagates nothing but error and folly in the world. It was this self-love that ruined both Lucifer and Adam, and stripped them of the divine love and life with which they were once adorned. In order that we may obtain the victory over this spirit of self-love, and with a view to facilitate this conquest, the Lord thinks, as it were, with himself: "I will permit a lying tongue to assail thee, as I formerly permitted Satan to harass my servants Job and Paul, for their greater humiliation. This slandering tongue shall be thy devil, thy scourge, thy plague, to buffet thee (2 Cor. 12 : 7), and help to beat down that proud heart, that haughty look, that aspiring temper, which, without this curb, would at last carry all before it." Thus the Lord leaves nothing untried to accustom the soul to that excellent spirit of humility, and to restrain the spirit of self-love, by which men become allies to Lucifer, who, endeavoring to have a will of his own, opposite to that of his Maker, entirely lost his principality, and that original state in which he was at first created. Jude, ver. 6.

10. (7) Therefore as the Lord is faithful on his side, so he seeks to convert the venom of impious tongues thrown upon his children, into a precious medicine, by which to heal that self-love which is fostered within, and which engenders abundance of other spiritual diseases in the mind. When the world meditates evil against them, then God brings good out of the evil. As out of a certain poisonous serpent an antidote is prepared against poison itself, so God overrules the worst of counsels, and makes them turn to the greatest good to his children. Thus "all things work together for good to them that love God." Rom. 8 : 28 They are taught thereby to practise one of the noblest of the works of charity, which is, to "bless their enemies, and to pray for them who despitefully use them." Matt. 5 : 44. He that has thus far gained the conquest over corrupt nature, so as to pray heartily for

his enemies, is almost arrived at the sublimest degree of true evangelical charity, which alone is able to soften our stubborn hearts into the mild and compassionate heart of Christ, who has also set us a blessed pattern to follow: "Father!" said he, "forgive them; for they know not what they do." Luke 23:34. For wherever true love is rooted in a soul, it will most certainly produce a tender commiseration towards enemies; who, as the Christian knows, whilst they hate men, render themselves entirely unfit for any communion with God and Christ, and give up their hearts to the devil, that great hater of souls. And this should influence every Christian to commiserate such evil men, who are not of God, but of their father the devil; and lest they should forever sink into the jaws of Satan, the Lord commands his people to pray for them, with this motive annexed to the command: "That ye may be the children of your Father who is in heaven." Matt. 5:45. What has been said of the overruling power of God, whereby he converts the venom of lying tongues into a healing medicine, will more fully appear from the following instances. Joseph would never have been exalted to the dignity of ruler over the land of Egypt, had he not fallen under the malicious lashes of a wanton tongue, and thereby been condemned to prison. Gen. 39:17; 41:40. Had Moses not been persecuted by the violent accusations of his enemies, and obliged to flee from the face of Pharaoh (Exod. 2:15), he had never seen the Lord in the bush, after having led Jethro's flock to Horeb. Exod. 3:2. The spiteful tongue of Doeg the Edomite, and of other enemies of David (1 Sam. 22:9; Ps. 52), drew many a noble Psalm from the latter. Thus Doeg's poisonous tongue was David's medicine. The same overruling wisdom of God appeared for Daniel, when, by the virulence of his accusers, he was cast into the den of lions, but was most triumphantly exalted again by divine Providence, for many good and noble ends; his enemies themselves being made to lay the foundation of his greatness. Dan. 6. Mordecai had the same experience. His ruin was devised by the murderous tongue of Haman (Esther 3:6); but the Lord returned his wickedness upon his own head, and his bloody machinations only hastened the destruction of their contriver. Esther 7:10. Therefore, "commit thy way unto the Lord: trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass. And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday." Ps. 37:5, 6. Only endeavor to be in constant union with the Lord thy God, and to love him with all thy heart, and then he will direct thy steps. For "when a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him." Prov. 16:7. If the world be permitted to stain thy reputation here, and to detract from thy honor, what matters it, provided the Lord dignify thee with a crown of glory hereafter? It is he that will deliver and honor thee at last (Ps. 91:15); and it is he that will give thee both grace here, and glory hereafter. Ps. 84:11.

11. (8) Another comfort in trials of this nature, may be drawn from the control which the Lord exercises over the hearts of all men. It is he that "looks upon all the inhabitants of the earth, from the place of his habitation." He "fashioneth their hearts; he considereth all their works" (Ps. 33:14, 15); and he "will

not deliver thee unto the will of thine enemies." Ps. 41 : 2. A man is often transported with rage and malice to such a degree, that he would bear down all that comes in his way; but a little while after, you will find that the man is altogether cooled; his heat is allayed, and he is reduced to such a moderation of temper, as if he were become quite another man. Nay, how often do we see that a bad man, designing nothing but spite and malice, is stopped in the midst of his passionate pursuit, and, as it were, obliged not only to drop his wicked design, but also to bestow tokens of favor upon the person whom he was about to affront. This is an operation peculiar to the wisdom of God, who, by his secret power, often renders abortive the most malicious projects conceived against his children. Thus the Lord came to Laban, when incensed against Jacob, and commanded him to "speak not to him, either good or bad." Gen. 31 : 24. And Esau, who bore his brother no good will, when he came within sight of him, must needs run and meet him, embrace him, fall on his neck, kiss him, and receive him with the most endearing expressions of love and kindness. Gen. 33 : 4.

12. (9) Lastly, it is the nature of a malignant tongue, to swell high suddenly, and by rage and fury to gain universal applause and admiration; but its downfall is as sudden as its rise. Calumny is like a fire, the flame of which mounts up to the very sky; but the want of fuel will soon make it go down again. The reason is, because God, who is the everlasting Truth, hates a spirit of lies, and cannot endure it. And this is also the reason, why those that have raised their greatness on no other foundation than lying and self-conceit, may indeed dazzle the eyes of others for a season; but when they flatter themselves as fixed in an unshaken condition, then generally their ruin is ready at hand, and the Lord's judgment destroys all. Then "the lying lips are put to silence, which spoke grievous things proudly and contemptuously against the righteous" (Ps. 31 : 18); a text which plainly shows, that pride and disdain of others, are wont to accompany a slandering and lying tongue. But "woe unto thee that dealest treacherously; when thou shalt make an end to deal treacherously, they shall deal treacherously with thee." Isa. 33 : 1. "For the rod of the wicked shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous; lest the righteous put forth their hands unto iniquity." Ps. 125 : 3. Though a treacherous man may go on in quest of more honor and greatness; yet shall "evil hunt the violent man at last, and overthrow him." Ps. 140 : 11.

Sundry consolatory passages, selected from the Psalms, for those who are assailed by the reproaches of enemies.

13. Thou, O Lord, art a shield for me; my glory, and the lifter up of mine head. Arise, O Lord; save me, O my God: for thou hast smitten all mine enemies upon the cheek-bone; thou hast broken the teeth of the ungodly. Ps. 3 : 3, 7.—O ye sons of men, how long will ye turn my glory into shame? how long will ye love vanity, and seek after leasing (lying)? But know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself; the Lord will hear when I call unto him. Ps. 4 : 2, 3.

14. Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing: the Lord will abhor the bloody and deceitful man.—There is no faithfulness in their mouth; their

inward part is very wickedness; their throat is an open sepulchre; they flatter with their tongue. Destroy thou them, O God; let them fall by their own counsels.—But let all those that put their trust in thee rejoice: let them also that love thy name be joyful in thee. For thou, Lord, wilt bless the righteous; with favor wilt thou compass him as with a shield. Ps. 5 : 6, 9, 10, 11, 12.

15. Let all mine enemies be ashamed and sore vexed: let them return and be ashamed suddenly. Ps. 6 : 10.

16. O Lord, my God, in thee do I put my trust: save me from all them that persecute me, and deliver me: lest he tear my soul like a lion, rending it in pieces, while there is none to deliver.—Behold, he travaileth with iniquity, and hath conceived mischief, and brought forth falsehood. He made a pit, and digged it, and is fallen into the ditch which he made. His mischief shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealing shall come down upon his own pate. Ps. 7 : 1, 2, 14, 15, 16.

17. Keep me as the apple of the eye; hide me under the shadow of thy wings, from the wicked that oppress me, from my deadly enemies, who compass me about. Ps. 17 : 8, 9.

18. I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies.—In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried unto my God; he heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry came before him, even unto his ears. Ps. 18 : 3, 6.

19. The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? When the wicked, even mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell. Though a host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident.—For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock.—Teach me thy way, O Lord, and lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies.—For false witnesses are risen up against me, and such as breathe out cruelty. I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait on the Lord. Ps. 27 : 1, 2, 3, 5, 11, 12, 13, 14.

20. But I trusted in thee, O Lord: I said, Thou art my God. My times are in thy hand: deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from them that persecute me.—Let the lying lips be put to silence; which speak grievous things proudly and contemptuously against the righteous.—Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men! Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the pride of man: thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues. Ps. 31 : 14, 15, 18, 19, 20.

21. Let them be as chaff before the wind: and let the angel of the Lord chase them. Let their way be dark and slippery: and let the angel of the Lord persecute them. Ps. 35 : 5, 6.

22. Fret not thyself because of evil doers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb.—The wicked plotteth against the just, and gnasheth upon him with his teeth. The Lord shall laugh at him: for he seeth that his day is coming. The wicked have

drawn out the sword, and have bent their bow, to cast down the poor and needy, and to slay such as be of upright conversation. Their sword shall enter into their own heart, and their bows shall be broken.—The wicked watcheth the righteous, and seeketh to slay him. The Lord will not leave him in his hand, nor condemn him when he is judged.—I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree. Yet he passed away, and, lo, he was not: yea, I sought him, but he could not be found. Ps. 37 : 1, 2, 12, 13, 14, 15, 32, 33, 35, 36.

23. But I, as a deaf man, heard not; and I was as a dumb man that openeth not his mouth. Then I was as a man that heareth not, and in whose mouth are no reproofs.—For I am ready to halt, and my sorrow is continually before me. Ps. 38 : 13, 14, 17.

24. I was dumb with silence, I held my peace, even from good; and my sorrow was stirred.—I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; because thou didst it.—For I am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were. Ps. 39 : 2, 9, 12.

25. Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved. But thou, O God, shalt bring them down into the pit of destruction: bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days; but I will trust in thee. Ps. 55 : 22, 23.

26. Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me; for my soul trusteth in thee: yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast. I will cry unto God most high; unto God that performeth all things for me. He shall send from heaven, and save me from the reproach of him that would swallow me up. God shall send forth his mercy and his truth. My soul is among lions: and I lie even among them that are set on fire, even the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword. Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens; let thy glory be above all the earth. They have prepared a net for my steps; my soul is bowed down: they have digged a pit before me, into the midst whereof they are fallen themselves. My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed: I will sing and give praise. Awake up, my glory; awake, psaltery and harp: I myself will awake early. I will praise thee, O Lord, among the people: I will sing unto thee among the nations. For thy mercy is great unto the heavens, and thy truth unto the clouds. Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens: let thy glory be above all the earth. Ps. 57 : 1–11.

27. Preserve my life from fear of the enemy; who whet their tongue like a sword, and bend their bows to shoot their arrows, even bitter words; that they may shoot in secret at the perfect: suddenly do they shoot at him, and fear not.—But God shall shoot at them with an arrow; suddenly shall they be wounded. So shall they make their own tongue to fall upon themselves: all that see them shall flee away. Ps. 64 : 1, 3, 4, 7, 8.

28. Mine enemies speak against me; and they that lay wait for my soul take counsel together, saying, God hath forsaken him; persecute and take him; for there is none to deliver him.—I will go in the strength of the Lord God: I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only. O God, thou hast taught me from my youth: and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works. Now also when

I am old and gray-headed, O God, forsake me not; until I have shewed thy strength unto this generation, and thy power to every one that is to come.—Thou, which hast shewed me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth. Thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side. Ps. 71 : 10, 11, 16, 17, 18, 20, 21.

29. I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth. He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber. Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord is thy keeper: the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand. The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul. The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore. Ps. 121 : 1–8.

30. Deliver me, O Lord, from the evil man: preserve me from the violent man; which imagine mischiefs in their heart; continually are they gathered together for war. They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent: adders' poison is under their lips. Keep me, O Lord, from the hands of the wicked; preserve me from the violent man; who have purposed to overthrow my goings. The proud have hid a snare for me, and cords; they have spread a net by the way side; they have set gins for me. I said unto the Lord, Thou art my God: hear the voice of my supplications, O Lord. O God, the Lord, the strength of my salvation, thou hast covered my head in the day of battle. Grant not, O Lord, the desires of the wicked: further not his wicked device; lest they exalt themselves. As for the head of those that compass me about, let the mischief of their own lips cover them. Let burning coals fall upon them; let them be cast into the fire; into deep pits, that they rise not up again. Let not an evil speaker be established in the earth: evil shall hunt the violent man to overthrow him. I know that the Lord will maintain the cause of the afflicted, and the right of the poor. Surely the righteous shall give thanks unto thy name: the upright shall dwell in thy presence. Ps. 140 : 1–13.

31. I cried unto the Lord with my voice; with my voice unto the Lord did I make my supplication. I poured out my complaint before him; I shewed before him my trouble. When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then thou knewest my path. In the way wherein I walked have they privily laid a snare for me. I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul. I cried unto thee, O Lord: I said, Thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living. Attend unto my cry; for I am brought very low: deliver me from my persecutors; for they are stronger than I. Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name: the righteous shall compass me about: for thou shalt deal bountifully with me. Ps. 142 : 1–7.

CHAPTER XVIII.

SHOWING HOW THE SORROWS AND PAINS OF CHRIST SHOULD TEACH US TO SUBDUE THE LUSTS OF THE FLESH.

My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.—Matt. 26 : 38.

THE third branch of the cross of Christ consists in the unspeakable sorrow and sufferings which began at his very birth. For as his most holy human soul was filled with the light of divine knowledge and wisdom, by virtue of the personal union of his two natures, he saw all that he should experience in the future, as if it were already present; and thus his soul was, from the beginning, filled with the deepest sorrow, and suffered inward pain. He foresaw his future inconceivable and inexpressible agony of soul, and his unspeakable bodily pains. For the more delicate, pure, and innocent, the human nature in Christ was, the greater were the pain and anguish that affected him. Of this those sorrows and spiritual torments, that are wont to work upon the inmost soul, are a sufficient proof. For inasmuch as the constitution of the soul, by reason of its immortality, exceeds that of the body in worth and delicacy; so also her pains exceed those of the body in depth and acuteness. For this reason the Lord never rejoiced upon his own account, and with reference only to himself; but it was when he saw that his Heavenly Father was known and worshipped, and his divine works manifested unto the world. Hence "he rejoiced in spirit" at the return of the seventy disciples. Luke 10 : 21.

2. Since all those things, which he was to suffer, from his own people and countrymen, were known to him, he could not but be highly afflicted and in constant sorrow; and this was also still more the case, the more nearly he approached the time appointed for his passion. This he himself testifies, saying, "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" Luke 12 : 50. And the time of this baptism being come, he says, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death" (Matt. 26 : 38) : intimating thereby the excessive and unutterable grief and anguish of spirit, that forced from him that sweat, which "was as it were great drops of blood." Luke 22 : 44. And what pains he suffered besides, in his tender and sensible body, no tongue can sufficiently declare. *First*, because sin is an infinite and inexpressible evil. For, its full punishment and atonement could not but cause torment so exquisite, that to a mere man it had been altogether insupportable.

3. The *second* reason of this exquisite grief was, because he bore the sins of the world : not merely those sins which from the beginning of the world had been committed, but those also which men should become guilty of through all ages, down to the very end of the world. And, therefore, such as are the number and malignity of *all* sins, of *all* men, through *all* generations; such also were the pain and sorrow endured by the Lord. For

which cause he prayed in Gethsemane, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." Matt. 26 : 39.

4. *Thirdly*, the sufferings of Christ were heightened by that perfect love which he bore to his heavenly Father. The greater our love is, the greater is also the grief occasioned by what interferes with it: as on the contrary, the less it is, the less are we troubled by that which thwarts it. Since, therefore, Christ loved his heavenly Father with most exalted and consummate love, his affliction must needs have been the more grievous, on account of the heinousness of sin, with which fallen men so shamefully insulted so beloved a Father. Hence the sins of the whole world, with the pains he endured for them, did not so much affect him, as the sorrow he felt on account of the indignity offered to a God, who, in his very nature, is love itself. And it was upon account of this love of the Father (which deserved all the returns of love the creature was able to make), that Christ sustained most exquisite pains, and a most ignominious death; in order that by a satisfaction proportionable to the offence, he might regain for wretched mortals that love and favor of God which they had forfeited by their offences.

5. In the *fourth* place, the suffering of Christ was endured on account of his perfect love to mankind. For as he died for all, and bore the sins of all, so also was he exceedingly desirous to see the object of his death accomplished, which is the salvation of all men. Hence the unbelief and impenitence of men, which hindered this love from taking effect upon sinners, caused him most grievous and bitter torments: but especially was he pained that they threw away their souls when he desired to save them. Not to mention the cruel hatred and envy, wrath and blasphemy, by which some were hurried on, even to trample on that blood which was designed to redeem them. He himself says, "Reproach hath broken my heart" (Ps. 69 : 20); lamenting not so much his own, as the condition of them who reproached him in so heinous a manner.

6. *Fifthly:* another circumstance which pierced the very heart of our Lord, was his being forsaken of God, notwithstanding he was the Son of God himself. For though it is true that God could not forsake him, who himself was God, and did not cease to be God even when he hung on the cross, when he expired, and when he was buried; yet does he complain of being forsaken by him. Ps. 22 : 1; Matt. 27 : 46. But this lamentable complaint the Lord poured out, in order to show that God withdrew from him, as a man, the support of his comfort, hiding himself for a while in this dark hour. He manifests also, by this exclamation, the extreme misery in which he then was.

7. The *sixth* aggravation of the anguish of Christ, was on account of his Person, for he was very God. Whence it is plain, that all the reproaches and blasphemies uttered against him were an infinite evil, as being directed against the entire Person of Christ, who was true God and man; and so he endured, both as God and man, the revilings of his enemies in his whole Person. All this left a most exquisite impression of sorrow upon his soul.

8. And, in the *seventh* place, who is able sufficiently to explain what pains the Lord suffered in his most innocent, most holy, most tender, and delicate *body?* Or who can doubt that a body

most innocent, most delicate, most noble, most pure, conceived by the Holy Ghost, personally united with the divine nature, filled with the Spirit of God, and with all the fulness of the Godhead; I say, who can doubt that such a body should not feel most grievous and bitter pains, when smitten, scourged, wounded, pierced, crucified, and put to death? No words are sufficiently expressive to set forth the pain and acuteness thereof. What is all our affliction, if compared with this suffering of the Lord? We, as sinners, have justly deserved eternal death and damnation; and yet even the smallest cross is too heavy a burden for tender Christians, who do what they can to shake it off, though it is designed as wholesome medicine, to procure the health of the soul. Surely, he who is a sincere lover of Christ, can wish no other condition of life, but such as comes up nearest to the original of the blessed life of Christ. 1 Peter 2:21. This conformity of our lives to the life of Christ we ought to account our greatest gain and dignity in this world. Let the true lover of Christ rejoice in this, that he has been thought worthy to suffer with Christ, his Head and Saviour.

9. Since, then, affliction is to be the companion of a Christian in his way to heaven, or, to use the apostle's phrase, since he must, "through much tribulation, enter into the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22); what cause can we assign why we should not willingly walk in the same path? For we know that the Son of God himself travelled this way before us, and by his holy example sanctified it, not having "entered into his glory but by sufferings." Luke 24:26. And since, notwithstanding all the insults of the enemy, he entered into glory at last; we may also assure ourselves, that our affliction, which is but for a moment, shall be followed in the end by an everlasting weight of glory and happiness. 2 Cor. 4:17.

10. In fine, as the Lord did not spare himself, but devoted himself entirely to the service of others, undergoing all from no other impulse than fervent love and charity; so this love of our Redeemer should awaken love in our souls, and never should we grow faint and weary under any affliction whatever.

CHAPTER XIX.

SHOWING HOW WE SHOULD BEHOLD IN THE CRUCIFIED CHRIST, AS IN THE BOOK OF LIFE, BOTH OUR SINS, AND ALSO THE DISPLEASURE, THE LOVE, JUSTICE, AND WISDOM OF GOD.

And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the back side.—Rev. 5:1.

CHRIST crucified is set before our eyes as a Book of Life, whence we may learn the sacred wisdom of God, which is in him eminently displayed. For the whole Scripture, the Law and all the prophets, are completely fulfilled in him by his most perfect obedience, wherein he was

faithful even unto death, and suffered the most cruel torments for the sins of the world. And this perfect internal and external obedience and suffering, is that Book of Life written within and without. Rev. 5 : 1.

2. In the first place, the Crucified Jesus presents us with a deplorable sight of our sins, both as to their number and heinousness. By the lamentable complaint into which he burst forth, he manifested that inward anguish of soul, which he suffered for the hidden and secret sins of our hearts. In his wounded and mangled body, bleeding on the cross, he leads us to behold and read, as in a book, the malignity of those sins which we have committed by all our members, in having yielded them up to the government of lust.

3. Besides this, the devout soul may behold in Christ Crucified, the justice of God in judging sinners. There was no other means by which to remove both our sin and the punishment attending it, than this high atonement made by the Lord himself. And hence we may learn that God is so far from letting any sin go unpunished, that he will rather deliver up his most beloved Son unto death than connive at the transgression of a sinner. Rom. 4 : 25.

4. Hence the soul may, further, contemplate the infinite love and condescending mercy of the Heavenly Father, most wonderfully displayed in our Crucified Saviour. Rather than that we should forever perish in our wretched state, and be subject to eternal death and damnation, he would have his own Son make satisfaction for us; which we ourselves, yea, and all the other creatures besides, had never been able to perform.

5. The contemplation of Christ Crucified will, in the next place, lead us to a sight of the most gracious will, providence and fatherly care of God, as it respects the recovery of lost mankind. No opposition was so great, no difficulty so stubborn and obstinate, which he did not conquer by his beloved Son, the author of our salvation. That we might inherit everlasting joy, he left nothing untried, nor did he spare even his own Son.

6. In the same Book of Life (the *Crucified Jesus*), appears also the infinite wisdom of God, namely, in finding out a means of salvation, such as could never have entered into the thoughts of any creature whatever, and which, at the same time, revealed both the justice and the mercy of God. For the work of our salvation was so wisely ordered, that by manifesting the infinite mercy of God, his justice was not at all infringed; as, on the other hand, Christ by his death has so atoned for sin, that in satisfying the claims of strict justice, his infinite mercy is rendered more bright and conspicuous. And as by eating of the forbidden tree, the first Adam (Gen. 3 : 1), brought us under the curse; so God in his marvellous wisdom has, by the tree of the cross, taken away the curse, and restored his blessing. 1 Peter 2 : 24. Yea, by the unsearchable counsel of the divine wisdom, it is so brought about, that through the death of Christ, all things detained under the power of death are restored to life, death itself being destroyed at last. 1 Cor. 15: 26. By his pains and torments is purchased for us eternal pleasure in heaven; by his griefs and sorrows are gained joys celestial without end. And by this wonderful work of God, though foolish in the eye of the world, he hath confounded the wisdom of the wise; and by the foolishness of God (1 Cor.

1 : 25), he has manifested a wisdom altogether unfathomable to men.

7. In Christ Crucified farther appears the brightest and fairest pattern of patience and meekness that was ever seen. So far was he from revenging the injuries done him, that he made intercession to his Father for his revilers, yea, even laid down his life for the sins of those who put him to death.

8. The believer discovers, moreover, in Christ the most astonishing humility, wherein he was so eminent, that he readily underwent the most ignominious death of the cross. Thus are the death and passion of Christ become to a faithful soul, redemption from hell, an avenue into paradise, a complete reconciliation with God, a victory over the devil, that great enemy of souls; a full satisfaction for sins, and in one word, an entire recovery of that original righteousness which had been lost.

9. By all this, it sufficiently appears to a Christian soul, that Christ Crucified is indeed a Book of Life, teaching nothing but the eternal and infallible truths of God. Let us then silently sit down at the feet of our Crucified Lord, who, as the great Teacher of souls, and Book of Life, will not neglect to instil into an humble heart, the lesson of a living faith, and of a holy life consequent on it; provided we desire to be not dead, but living members of his body, and to be so controlled and influenced both by his life and his death, as to produce abundant living fruits.

CHAPTER XX.

OF THE POWER AND NECESSITY OF PRAYER, IN THESE HOLY CONTEMPLATIONS.

I will seek him whom my soul loveth.—Song of Sol. 3 : 2.

SINCE the living knowledge of God and of Christ crucified, is not to be attained, unless we keep our eye constantly fixed upon the innocent and holy life of Jesus Christ our Lord; and since we cannot arrive at this elevation of mind, but by devout, humble, believing and earnest prayer; it is, therefore, highly necessary to make some further inquiry into the nature of prayer. It consists not so much in an utterance of words, as in a meditation or intercourse of the believing heart with God, and in a lifting up of the soul, and of all her faculties and powers, to our Heavenly Father. Ps. 19 : 14; 25 : 1. As it is impossible to find God without prayer, so prayer is a means for seeking and finding him. Matt. 7 : 7, 8.

2. And as it falls under a threefold denomination, it being either *oral, internal*, or *supernatural* (according to St. Paul: "I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also;" 1 Cor. 14 : 15); so we shall now consider each of these in order.

3. *Oral prayer* is an humble address to God, and an external exercise, which conducts the soul to the internal duty of prayer, and leads man into the interior recesses of his own heart;

especially if the words uttered be digested in faith, and if, by attentive application, they be well pondered and considered. This often proves a means of elevating the spirit and soul so near unto God, as to enjoy with faith a truly filial intercourse with Him, our heavenly Father.

4. *Internal* prayer is offered up without intermission, in faith, spirit, and mind, according to the words of our Saviour: "The true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth" (John 4 : 23); also those of David: "Let the meditation of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord." Ps. 19 : 14. And again: "I commune with mine own heart, and my spirit made diligent search." Ps. 77 : 6. Hereby, says St. Paul (speaking of the Spirit of adoption), we cry, Abba, Father. Rom. 8 : 15. By this internal prayer, we are led on gradually to that which is *supernatural;* which, according to Tauler, "consists in a true union with God by faith; when our created spirit dissolves, as it were, and sinks away in the uncreated Spirit of God. It is then that all is transacted in a moment, which in words or deeds has been done by all the saints from the beginning of the world." For this reason this supernatural prayer is unspeakably more excellent than that which is chiefly external; for therein the soul is by true faith so replenished with the divine love, that it can think of nothing else but of God only. Or if another thought should enter inadvertently into the heart, it proves but an occasion of trouble and sorrow; and the soul cannot be at ease till the intruding thought has again vanished. A soul that has once arrived at this happy state gives but little or no employment to the tongue: it is silent before the Lord: it panteth and thirsteth after God (Ps. 42 : 1, 2): it longeth, yea, even fainteth for him (Ps. 63 : 1; 84 : 2). It loves him only; it rests in him alone, not at all minding the world, nor worldly affairs. Whence it is still more and more filled with an experimental knowledge of God, and with such love and joy as no tongue is able to utter. Whatever the soul then perceives, is beyond all possibility of being expressed in words. If one should ask a soul under these contemplations: *What dost thou perceive?* the answer would be: A good that is above all good. *What seest thou?* A perfection of beauty, transcending all other beauty. *What feelest thou?* A joy surpassing all joys. *What dost thou taste?* The inexpressible delight of love. Nay, such a one would tell you that all the words that possibly could be framed, were but a shadow, and came infinitely short of the inward delight which was experienced. This is the voice of the eternal Word; this His speech to a loving soul; according to that saying of the Lord: "He that loveth me—I will manifest myself unto him." John 14 : 21. Whatever is felt here, whatever is seen here, is above nature. Here voices are heard, and words perceived that are termed words of the understanding and the mind.

5. This is the school in which the soul learns to know God aright, and, as it were, to taste him. Ps. 34 : 8. Whilst she knows him, she loves him: and whilst she loves him, she longs for the full enjoyment of him. This is the true sign of love, to desire wholly to possess the beloved object, to be intimately united with, and altogether transformed into it.

6. This the soul now and then perceives in a glance, which lasts but for a moment, and then vanishes again;

but it puts the soul upon fervent desires, to recover, if possible, that beam of heavenly joy which darted upon her, and to regain this divine taste, which so lovingly moved her. And she desires all this, in order to be more intimately united to her beloved. From this affectionate desire spring up both internal and oral prayer; the soul being fully convinced that these heavenly pleasures and visitations are to be attained only by prayer. And in all this, the wonderful wisdom of God appears, by which everything is managed in the most perfect order.

7. Thus none is permitted to attain unto mental prayer, but he who begins with that which is oral; and none can have an access to the *supernatural* prayer, or to a union with the highest and most delightful Good, but by *mental* prayer. But this highest can only be known by an experimental perception, not expressible by words.

8. And this is the cause why God so strictly, so frequently, and so earnestly enjoins prayer (Ps. 50 : 14); because it is a sacred pledge and bond, by which God draws us up to himself; and by elevating us into his immediate presence, detains us there a while, and unites us with himself, who is the source of all that is good. And thus we are always reminded of him; without this gracious order, we would think less frequently on him, and would not share in the gifts of his mercy.

9. If, therefore, thou desirest that thy prayer be acceptable to God, see that thou perform it not with a divided, but with a whole and entire heart. But this is not to be attained, except by frequent exercise and continual and unwearied application. Without this, thou canst not reap the fruits of prayer. On the contrary, as often as thou givest attendance to any external work, take care that thou set not thy heart wholly upon it. If thou eatest and drinkest, or attendest to any other outward affair incident to this life, see that thou bestow not thyself, that is, thy whole heart, upon it. For thy heart is to rest entirely in God alone, and closely to adhere to him by internal prayer. The more thou offerest up thyself to God by this prayer, the more will the divine light display itself in thy mind. And again, the more the knowledge of God is enlarged, the more delightful will be thy sense and perception of the highest good; the more ardent also and affectionate will be thy love to the Lord; and in fine, the more capable wilt thou be of enjoying him. The soul thus disposed will in a supernatural manner taste of a happiness so high and transcendent as infinitely to exceed all the language and expressions of men.

10. Of this threefold prayer, Jesus Christ himself has furnished us with a bright and perfect pattern, whence we may learn the nature and method of it, if we but attentively consider his manner of praying. We find that he often continued whole days and nights in prayer to God. Luke 6 : 12. He prayed with a fervency that made him triumph in prayer, and rejoice in spirit. Luke 10 : 21. He has, therefore, both by example and words, taught us the method of praying; and leaving us a pattern to follow, has commanded us to watch and pray, that we enter not into temptation. Matt. 6 : 9. He also most frequently recommends to us the duty of prayer (Matt. 26 : 41); thereby testifying that nothing was more pleasing, nothing more acceptable to him than our prayer; he having enjoined it for no other reason than to show

us how entirely he loved us, and how desirous he was that by prayer we should partake of the highest and most precious good.

11. Lest, however, we should allege that so noble an effect as that which results from a due performance of prayer was not attainable by us, the Lord did not think it enough to say: "Ask," but he has encouraged us also with a promise annexed: "And ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." John 16 : 24. He moreover excites us to pray by his own example, for amid his sufferings he prayed for us, as the Evangelist records: "For being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." Luke 22 : 44.

12. Set, therefore, this mirror of prayer before thine eyes, and study to persevere therein. Whenever thou feelest thyself faint and weak in prayer, then seriously advert to thy Lord Jesus Christ, who prayed not for himself, or upon his own account, but for thee and upon thy account, and thus sanctified thy prayer and blessed it, and added life and efficacy to it. Him, therefore, behold, who, though he was true God, and consequently in actual possession of all things, yet as man, obtained for thee of his Heavenly Father, all things by prayer. And hence as his whole life was a continual and uninterrupted prayer, and a perpetual longing to do the will of God: so he finished it with praying upon the cross. Luke 23 : 46.

13. If then thy Lord and Saviour prayed so fervently upon thy account, and was heard; surely he will not suffer thy prayers to be poured forth in vain. Did he procure all things for thee by prayer? And thinkest thou that thou canst obtain the least blessing without it? Thou knowest that without divine grace, light, and knowledge, and, in fine, without faith, not one can be saved; but it is no less plain that these and all other graces can be obtained by prayer alone. It is the Lord whom thou must entreat by fervent prayer, so as to obtain from him faith, love, hope, humility, patience, the Holy Spirit, together with the whole train of Christian virtues, which he is both able and willing to give, as well as to strengthen in thy soul. It is He alone that createth them in the heart. But as he that hath them not, cannot give them, so the Lord, whose gift they are, will not give them without being asked.

14. If then thou art truly desirous of pouring out thy soul before the Lord in fervency of spirit, there is not a more ready and effectual means of doing this than with the eyes of thy mind to behold the mirror of the most meek and humble life of Christ: to keep thy eyes attentively fixed upon the poverty, the reproach and contempt, the griefs and sorrows, and the most ignominious death of thy blessed Redeemer. Into this Book of Prayer, if thou diligently look, thy heart and mind will become inflamed with most affectionate and ardent desires. And though the devil and the flesh will not cease to assault thee with temptations on all hands, yet, by means of prayer, they shall be subdued at last.

15. Nor is the duty of prayer only stirred up and revived by the contemplation of Christ crucified, but the heart is also cleansed thereby. Without this purification of the heart by faith (Acts 15 : 9), our prayers will prove altogether ineffectual in the sight of God: whereas, after a sincere application to the Lord by prayer, the Spirit of God is wont to visit the heart

with his gracious presence, as he descended upon the apostles, even then, when they were with one accord praying at Pentecost. Acts 2 : 1.

16. With reference to the temptations that are wont to attend the duty of prayer, thou must behave thyself under them as the Lord himself did. In the midst of the agony which he suffered on the mount of Olives, "he prayed the more earnestly." Luke 22 : 44. Thus thy prayer shall prove at last the victory over all thy enemies. By prayer the Lord manifests himself unto his people. By prayer we learn to practise true humility; for by prayer the highest is united to the lowest; the most High God to the most humble heart. And this humility is the very channel through which abundance of divine grace is infused into the soul. The more this grace humbles man, the more grace itself gets rooted in the soul. And again, the more a soul is enriched with grace, the more she improves in humility.

17. The most considerable temptation and obstruction in prayer seems to be when God withdraws the grace of a fervent and lively devotion. And yet it is in this case that we ought the more to stir ourselves up to prayer and supplication. It is true, a prayer poured forth in a spirit of power and fervency must needs be acceptable to God; yet that which climbs up to the throne of grace in affliction, temptation, spiritual dryness, and brokenness of soul, is still more pleasing in his sight. For as the heart of a father is sooner softened into paternal tenderness, by the trembling words of a sick and languishing child, than by the strong voice of one in perfect health; so is the secret affliction, and feeble effort of a soul affected with a sense of her weakness in faith, of her poverty in spirit, and of her want of spiritual life and comfort, far more acceptable to our infinitely good God than the more vigorous petition of a soul elevated by a sense of faith and divine consolation. Only hold out patiently in these spiritual straits, and be assured that the Lord, in his own time, will certainly "restore unto thee the joy of his salvation." Ps. 51 : 12.

CHAPTER XXI.

OF THE POWER OF THE NOBLE VIRTUE OF HUMILITY.

Be clothed with humility; for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.—1 Pet. 5 : 5, 6.

WITHOUT true humility all prayer is in vain. Our Lord Jesus Christ is the Book from which this noble virtue is best learned; as he is, indeed, a perfect mirror to us of all the virtues and graces. Look on his life, and thou wilt find it made up of nothing but love and humility. Look on his doctrine, and thou wilt discern it to be absolute wisdom and truth; a doctrine consisting not in words, but in a living power; and in very deed itself.

2. Now, in order that we might

perfectly learn how to practise this virtue of humility, he taught it not only by words, but also by deeds and by his holy example, forasmuch as he humbled himself unto death, even the death of the cross. Phil. 2 : 8. Behold, then, O Christian, how this gracious virtue has its foundation, and its highest and most excellent ground, not in any angel, not in any apostle or eminent saint, but in Jesus Christ himself. And therefore he saith: "Learn of me" (Matt. 11 : 29), which is as if he had said: "Look ye upon me how I abase myself under all, who yet am above all. Behold, as much higher as my majesty is, so much lower is my humility: and so much dearer should this virtue be to you, as I your Lord and your God have described and delineated it in my whole life." Observe, he saith, "Learn of me." But what? Not to do mighty wonders, not to work signs and miracles, or show any great work of creation, but to be *meek* and *lowly*. "And if I did not teach you this with mine own example," saith the meek Lamb of God, "ye would not believe that this virtue is so high and so noble."

3. The humble Jesus chose to exemplify this as his concluding work: after his last supper, he took a towel and girded himself, and then "washed his disciples' feet;" that so he might by such example implant this virtue in all that should be ever called by his name, and might most sensibly imprint it on the heart of every one to whom this Gospel should come. Wherefore he also saith: "Know ye what I have done to you?" John 13 : 4, 5, 12. "Do ye indeed consider what it is that I have done? Will ye remember this that I have now done to you? Will ye be ready to serve one another in the same manner? And will ye humble yourselves one to the other, and submit gladly even to the meanest offices of charity? O learn of me, by what you have at this time seen me do: for I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Whosoever then shall forget my humility, the same shall forget a principal part both of my doctrine and my example, and shall never find rest unto his soul. Therefore let this my example be a rule for your whole lives, and let my life evermore be set before your eyes as a representation of humility."

4. And now let us show that without humility all prayer to God is utterly vain. Humility is a bright light in the heart, in which there is at once discovered to us our own nothingness, and the high majesty and overflowing goodness of God. Hence the more any man knows himself, the more he must needs come to the knowledge of his own nothingness. For when a man sees his own emptiness, and learns that he is destitute in himself of everything that is good, he begins to pray the more earnestly for the grace and mercy of God. He pants after, and betakes himself to God, as to the origin and fountain of all good things; desiring to know him aright, to praise him, and to honor him as he should. This desire being thus begotten in him, he pours out his heart by himself, and says, "When shall I come and appear before God?" In this humility he looks at God's majesty and greatness, as also at his superabundant love and grace. And hereupon the streams of grace flow down into such a faithful, humble soul, by prayer. And divine grace being thus communicated to the thirsty soul, there is hereby begotten in it a spirit of prayer, which ceases not to ascend

in holy aspirations, and to bring down the blessings of peace and righteousness. Through such grace of God there is a descent of the Holy Spirit into the soul, whose influences thereby grow continually stronger and stronger: and the "love of God" is by this means "shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost" (Rom. 5:5), which is given to us through the prayer of humility. For when the believing soul, conscious of her own vileness, reflects upon the humiliation of the Son of God, and beholds him humbling himself so as not only to put off the form of *God*, that he might appear in that of *man*, but even to suffer the greatest of evils in this vile form, for the vilest of his creatures; by this reflection and consideration, he is not only made humble, but hence, also, in this his humility, there springs up a most noble flame of love to God, which burns more and more day by day. And in this divine flame of love, the soul, being attracted by faith to God, is hence made to love all men in God, and in Christ; as calling to mind the exceeding great love of the Godhead towards mankind; and particularly how her Heavenly Father has in Christ loved her, and called her to the participation of his goodness. When thus the soul is drawn to God, and included in his love, the consequence is this, that as to all those who are beloved by God, the soul also cannot but love in like manner as God loveth them.

5. Hence it follows, that if any good befall our neighbor, charity will rejoice; but if any evil happen to him, it will sorrow. And the humble and the charitable person, behaving himself courteously and lovingly towards his neighbor on all occasions, does not rashly judge him, if he behold his misery; much less does he behave himself haughtily and superciliously towards him, or treat him with contempt. 1 Cor. 13:4. For the soul that is truly humble, can never so put off the sense of her own misery and vileness, as to despise another, or to esteem herself better than any; for she remembers the mire out of which she herself has been delivered. And while she stands, she knows well enough that she does not stand by her own strength, but solely by the help of divine grace.

6. Humble charity judges itself in the first place, examines itself before all, and influences us to condemn ourselves rather than others: and a neighbor's calamity will cause the soul to descend into herself, and deplore herself before God. In another's fall, the lowly and loving soul reads her own defaults, her own sins and transgressions, her own calamity and misery.

7. Moreover, by humility a man is confirmed in the knowledge of God, and established in hope. Having a consciousness of his own ignorance, blindness, and folly, in divine matters, he gives thanks to God for the revelation of his word, and imprints it more diligently on his heart. But considering also, that as he has no knowledge of God and divine things in himself, so likewise all his own abilities are nothing before God: he is hence established in a godly hope, placing his confidence in nothing but God only.

8. Another fruit of humility is, that it renders a man acceptable to others, even in the very outward course of his life. For it avoids contentions and quarrels, and composes the whole man to gentleness and benignity. Yea, a man is conformed by means of it even to Christ himself, who says in one of

the Psalms: "But I, as a deaf man, heard not; and I was as a dumb man that openeth not his mouth. Thus I was as a man that heareth not, and in whose mouth are no reproofs." Ps. 38:13, 14. Such a faithful and humble man as this is a living member of Christ, in whom Christ liveth.

9. Besides, humility brings with it true inward peace of the mind; so that he who is the possessor of it can by no miseries and calamities whatever be unduly distressed or disquieted, but may with St. Paul say: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" Romans 8:35. And he is mindful always of that saying: "My grace is sufficient for thee." 2 Cor. 12:9.

10. True humility also begets silence. He who is endued therewith, as he is sensible of his own ignorance and foolishness, will beware of speaking a great deal, or of being over-forward to teach others.

11. In short, it is impossible to enumerate how many spiritual benefits and fruits, how many heavenly treasures of virtues and graces, are comprehended in, and flow from, this most noble virtue; so that it may deservedly be regarded as a spiritual treasury. It is, therefore, not without reason, that the Son of God, our light, life, salvation, and treasure, would have us to learn it even of *himself*. O that this holy wish of our Lord might be fulfilled by all Christians; and that they would with all diligence learn from Him this most excellent virtue!

12. If it be asked, What is the means for acquiring this virtue, and by what way may one arrive at so great a treasure, which abounds so richly in the gifts of celestial grace? I answer, that there are two: first, ardent and devout prayer; and secondly, constant meditation on Christ crucified. Let us look earnestly to the passion and death of Christ, and let us meditate on it, as on a holy Book of life, till this root of the Christian virtues, with all which accompany it, grow up day by day in our hearts, as in a fruitful and well-cultivated soul.

CHAPTER XXII.

ALL THE WORKS OF A TRUE CHRISTIAN MUST BE DONE IN HUMILITY, OR THEY WILL, OTHERWISE, BECOME AN ABOMINATION AND IDOLATRY.

That which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.—LUKE 16:15.

ALL works that are a well-pleasing and acceptable sacrifice to God, can proceed from true faith alone; this will not fail to beget Christian humility in the heart. The effect of this will be meekly to acknowledge that with regard to any good that may be found in us, it is wholly and solely to be ascribed to the grace of God: "Not I, but the grace of God which was with me." 1 Cor. 15:10. He who does not do this, commits two sins: the first is, apostasy from God, by turning himself from God towards himself, that is, from the Supreme Being, towards that which is in itself nothing. The second is sacrilege, by taking to himself that honor which is

due to none but God; to whom, and not to man, everything that may be called good belongs. He, therefore, that doeth not all things in humility, steals from God the glory due to him. For when God says: "I will not give my glory to another, neither my praise to graven images" (Isaiah 42 : 8); he shows that all glory and praise are due to him alone.

2. If, therefore, any man applaud himself, either for knowing or doing anything, verily that man takes to himself the glory which is due to God only, and is thereby an idolater of himself. For this reason, ambition is abominable idolatry: and self-love, and self-esteem, are no less than having another God before him whose name is Jehovah. For this very reason also, the devil seeks to be honored and worshipped in the world.

3. Such a vainglorious devil, covetous of honor and worship from the world, every proud and arrogant person, by thinking highly of himself, cherishes in his heart. If thou be wise, see that thou break down and destroy this idol, which is set up in thy heart. Many persons are so holy that they will not even look upon any outward images, lest they should happen to be defiled by them; not observing, at the same time, that great idol which they carry about with them in their hearts, and by which they are to such a degree defiled as to become an abomination before God. For all that is most highly esteemed by men (through self-love and ambition) is an abomination before God. Whence all who seek only their own honor, or power, or ascribe aught to themselves as their own, are idolaters. Thus the whole world lieth in idolatry; and every house has its living idols.

4. That idolatry which defiles thee, proceeds from within, even from the heart. To whatsoever thy heart inclines, in whatsoever it acquiesces and rests, and unto whatsoever it cleaves by love and inclination, whether it be good fortune, wealth, honor, power, or long life; that very thing immediately becomes an idol, and has seduced thee into the sin of idolatry. Idolatry is not any outward pollution; but that which is internal, spiritual, and springing up within. It is so that God considers it; He judges all things according to the heart; and it is so only that he looks, trying the hearts and reins (Ps. 7 : 9), and judging of all things according to the faith or unbelief there found by him. Whence Christ has also plainly told thee, "Where thy treasure is, there will thy heart be also" (Matt. 6 : 21); that is, thy God, thy rest, thy peace, thy trust will be there; and there will be thy paradise, yea, there will heaven and all things be to thee. Observe closely what that object is on which thy heart loves to dwell, for it is surely thy God, whatever its nature may be. If thy heart cleave fast to God only, then is *He* thy God, and blessed art thou: according as it is written: "Happy are the people whose God is the Lord." Ps. 144 : 15. And again, "Delight thyself also in the Lord, and he shall give thee the desire of thy heart." Ps. 37 : 4. But if thy mind cleave to the world, then the world is thy God. And so of the rest.

5. It hence appears that there are really in the world no other idols but such as the heart of man makes for him. The devil himself is called "the god of this world" (2 Cor. 4 : 4), because the ungodly follow him, do his deeds, love darkness, and take pleasure in the works of the devil. And thus men make a god even of Satan.

6. Idols of wood are easily avoided, but take heed of the idols of gold. See that thou be not ensnared by these. It is no hard matter to keep from dead idols; but take heed that thou worship not living ones, and especially thyself. As soon as thou ascribest honor, skill, or power to thyself, thou settest up thyself in the place of God. This idolatry is properly struck at by God, when he says that he "will not give his glory to another." Isa. 42:8. For whatsoever is, or is called by the name of honor and glory, is due to none but him, who is the Most High, and the most Holy One, and the sovereign and everlasting Good. Whosoever, therefore, thou art, that wouldest not make an idol of thyself, nor pollute thy works with the foulest of abominations before God, learn hence, not to ascribe to thyself honor, or glory, or praise; knowing that it is true humility to shun honor, and to account one's self unworthy of all glory. When thou shalt do this, and shalt have mortified all ambition and self-esteem, then thou shalt be known to be dead to the world indeed. From this springs up the new man, in whom is found the most noble life of Christ; which life, he himself has described as being meekness and lowliness of heart. Matt. 11:29. He, on the contrary, is still carnal, and lives after the flesh, according to the old birth, who would be honored and greatly esteemed: because it is the nature of the carnal man to endeavor to be, or to be accounted above all others. But if any man seek to be accounted nothing of, he has a heart truly spiritual and Christian. But alas! where shall we now find the true Christians, that is, such as are willing to be slighted, and to be reputed as nothing? For, as hath been said before, it is the property of the true followers of Christ, to deny themselves, to hate themselves, to despise themselves, and to renounce all that is theirs, for his sake. Matt. 10:38; Luke 9:23. Such are indeed genuine Christians.

7. If any one should here ask of me, What then is a Christian to do, if it please God so to honor him as to give him grace and glory before the world (Ps. 84:11), as in the case of Daniel: and, since God has appointed certain distinctions among men, several orders, states, and offices; and has for that end variously distributed his gifts among them, What is the duty of a Christian, if he be advanced to some post of dignity? I answer, If this be thy lot, then render all the honor which is conferred upon thee to God again; and ascribe nothing to thyself which is the right of another, or take that to be thine which is God's only.

8. As soon, therefore, as any honor is given thee, see that, being mindful of thy low estate, thou transfer it all to God, and keep nothing thereof to thyself. If thou neglectest to do this, and shouldest be induced to attribute anything to thyself, it is certain that thou must thereby lose divine grace, while, with a sacrilegious impiety, thou invadest that which of right belongs to God. So if thou excel others in spiritual or natural gifts, in wisdom or skill, wealth or dignity, be watchful not to take this honor to thyself; yea, let it be thy joy and delight to offer all up to God again, from a most deep and intimate devotion of thy heart. This thou wilt not fail to do, and to give that glory to Him which is due, when thou shalt glory in nothing but in Him only, according to the words of the Prophet: "Let not the wise

man glory in his wisdom; neither let the mighty man glory in his might; let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth; for in these things I delight, saith the Lord." Jer. 9 : 23, 24.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A MAN WHO DOES NOT PERCEIVE HIS OWN EMPTINESS, AND DOES NOT GIVE ALL THE HONOR TO GOD, COMMITS THE GREATEST OF SINS, AND FALLS LIKE SATAN.

Verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity.—Ps. 39 : 5.

TO the end that man may acknowledge his own vanity, he is compared by the Psalmist (Ps. 39 ; 144 : 4), to a shadow; and again in another place (Ps. 90 : 5), to a dream. Now what is a shadow? It is a lifeless resemblance of that thing on which it depends; and has in itself neither substance nor life, but is nothing. In like manner, man of himself has neither substance, life, strength, nor indeed any ability whatsoever; but depends on God, even as a shadow on the body, or as light on the sun.

2. Whosoever, therefore, so forgets himself as not to depend on God, who alone is all in all, "thinking himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself." Gal. 6 : 3. He falls from the true eternal and Sovereign Being into his own nothingness; from the unchangeable Good into vanity; from truth itself into a lie.

3. This is not only the greatest of sins, but of punishments also. For the more man turns from God to himself, the more he approaches extreme misery and calamity. And man by this means, even by turning himself away from God, towards his own faculties and powers, in truth punishes thereby the very sin which he commits. He is then accounted to turn himself away from God, and to forsake "the rock of his salvation" (Deut. 32 : 15), whenever he ascribes to himself any degree of power or strength, art or skill, wisdom, or honor, or merit, so as to be willing to be thought somebody, and to be much accounted of; when, in very deed, all these in no wise belong to man, or to any creature, but to God only. Every creature is but a mere shadow, and of itself merely nothing; even so as the life, substance, faculty, wisdom, powers, and strength which it seems to have, are not properly its own, but are God's only.

4. Wherefore, as soon as a man ascribes all or any of these to himself, he becomes guilty of apostasy from God. Nor indeed was the devil's apostasy aught else, but the not abiding within the bounds, duties, and properties of a creature, which has all its life, substance, and ability in God, and ought to hold the same from him, as the shadow does with respect to the

body and the motion thereof. For any one, therefore, to ascribe those things to himself which are God's; or to challenge to himself honor, glory, wisdom, or esteem (forasmuch as none of these suit a creature, but are all to be transferred to God alone, to whom they really appertain), is properly to fall like Satan. Hence God permitted him to fall, not sustaining him any longer with his grace, which was by him disowned. The same thing must befall all men who, through pride and ambition, presume to arrogate to themselves any of those things which are God's. They are not upheld by the grace of God, who arrogantly turn themselves away from God, affecting to be as God. God alone being All in all, and moreover being the only Good, or the *one Good*, and the *all-Good* essentially; it would be most unreasonable for any creature to claim to itself aught of that which is good. Hence our blessed Lord saith, "There is none good but one, that is God" (Matt. 19: 17); meaning, that he is the essential Good, and he alone is all that is good. This property of God, our Saviour was not willing to take unto himself in his state of humiliation, forasmuch as he was then held to be no more than a mere man; that thus, by his most bright example, he might instruct us that man ought not to ascribe to himself the things which are God's.

5. When man does otherwise, he commits the greatest of all sins, and, aiming at divinity, stains himself thereby with a most nefarious sacrilege, being turned from God to himself. And as many as are in this condition, seek help, counsel, and comfort, not from God only, as they ought, but from creatures, and sometimes even from the devil himself. But what greater madness, or what worse blindness is there, than to expect good from evil, life from death, blessedness from the damned, help from the helpless, blessedness from the accursed, and light from darkness? Whereas, on the other hand, it is the highest wisdom to look for good from the source of all good, to seek life from the fountain of life, to expect blessedness from the spring of salvation, and to go for help to him who can do all things, and "with whom nothing is impossible." Luke 1: 37.

CHAPTER XXIV.

OF THE NOBLE VIRTUE OF LOVE, AND OF ITS POWER, SOUNDNESS, AND PURITY.

He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love.—1 JOHN 4: 8.

LOVE, says St. Paul, is the greatest of all virtues, and without it all gifts are unprofitable (1 Cor. 13: 13); therefore he admonishes us, saying, "Let all your things be done with charity." 1 Cor. 16: 14. Accordingly we are to pray with charity, as our Lord says: "If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee; go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother." Matt. 5: 23, 24. And in the Lord's Prayer, our forgiving our neighbor's debts, or trespasses, is strictly

joined to God's forgiving ours. Matt. 6 : 12, 14, 15.

2. Love is, however, so singular a virtue, that a man may mistake therein as easily as in anything else. Therefore nothing ought to be looked upon with a more suspicious eye than love; for there is nothing which can so powerfully incline, force, or restrain, and so thoroughly penetrate the mind, as love. Therefore, if love be not ruled by the true light, the Holy Ghost, it precipitates the soul into a thousand calamities.

3. And this I do not say with respect to the love of evil; for this, as a diabolical thing, is by all Christians to be avoided; but I speak of that love which is betwixt God, and man, and his neighbor. Love, when not regulated by divine wisdom, can easily be deceived, misled, and thrust out of its due order, so as not to reach the true end. Many think they have the love of God in their souls, and yet have the love of the world, or their own love, nay, it may be the love of Satan.

4. Take an instance of this fact: any one that loves the Lord God only for the sake of temporal things, that he may be preserved by him from temporal misfortunes, loves himself more than God, and prefers his own welfare before God. This is called inordinate love. He ought to love God more than himself, nay, love him above all things; and all things, both good and evil days, he ought to love for the sake of God.

5. But when man prefers himself to the love of God, he surely makes himself God, by loving himself more than God; and whilst he loves not God as God, for his sake, but merely for his own private interest, he has a false and deceitful love. He that has such a love, loves all things for his own sake, for the profit and honor which he reaps from them. He loves also holy men, nay, the very word of God, for this reason only, that it may afford him a show and name of holiness, but not for the sake of that excellent Good which lies hid therein.

6. And because such a love is impure, it brings forth impure fruits, which are self-interest, self-honor, self-lust; all which are carnal and earthly, not heavenly and spiritual fruits. Thus many love great skill and learning, that they may be preferred to others, and may rule over them; not from a principle of love to God and their neighbor, but from a love to themselves, thinking thereby to gain great honors and preferments.

7. There are others also who love God that he may spare them, and not punish them for their sins in dreadful severity; nay, that he may be bountiful to them in this present time; but this, alas! is a very weak love. For these love God for their own profit, and not for his own sake, or not by reason of his being the most excellent and highest Good.

8. Others love God that he may bestow upon them many gifts in understanding and wisdom, whereby they might gain a great reputation.

9. Some also love virtue, not for the sake of virtue itself, but that they may obtain a great name, and be looked upon as brave, virtuous men, and men famous for their honesty and piety. All this is not true love, for it tends not to the right end.

10. There is often also love betwixt some persons uniting themselves by a love of their own, which increases in them so much that they are pleased with everything done by him whom they love. For love always follows its beloved, and cleaves wholly unto him. And thereby one is often in-

volved and drawn aside into evil; or even the lover himself allures his beloved to it, because he knows that so it pleases him; and by this false and deceitful love he is hindered from prayer and all other Christian virtues.

11. Therefore it is highly necessary that our love should be guided and ruled by the Holy Spirit, and by our meditations on the whole life of Christ and his holy sufferings, out of which nothing but *pure* love shines forth. He loved God purely, above all things, and not himself. He loved man with a pure, undefiled love, and not himself. He did and spake nothing for his own sake, but all for ours. Whatsoever he did and spoke was for our benefit; he was not profited by it, but we were. All his pains and labors, nay, his greatest torments and afflictions, were not too hard or heavy for him, that we might be benefited and saved thereby; nay, his very cross was joy unto him, that he might fulfil the will of God his Father.

12. That is a pure, undefiled love for which nothing is too difficult, which complains of nothing, nay, which spares not itself, but gives itself for the beloved's sake, even unto death. Whatsoever crosses and sufferings God sends, this love regards as good. It sees that it is the holy will of God, and therefore it would rather suffer much more for the same, and is very well contented with everything that God willeth; for it knows that God orders all things right and well.

13. And as love unites itself to the beloved, it learns also his manners, follows him for his love's sake, and does that which is well-pleasing unto him: so he that loves Christ rightly learns of him his manner of life and his virtues, for he knows it is well-pleasing unto him. He conforms himself to his image, and remains all his life under the yoke and cross of Christ, even as Christ, during his whole life, bore the cross of poverty, contempt, and pains. And although no man in this frail state can attain unto perfect love, yet every Christian is to labor, that his love be not false, but as pure as possible, according to what St. Paul says, "Love out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned." 1 Tim. 1 : 5.

14. This pure love, derived from Christ and the Holy Ghost, works in man every good thing, and is never idle. It is its joy to do good, for it can do nothing else; even as the Lord God says, "I will rejoice over them to do them good." Jer. 32 : 41. Why? Because God is love itself, which can do nothing else but that which it is in its own being. And this is a sign of pure and true love. For this love does not say, "I am not obliged to do this or that;" but where it has no law, there it is a law unto itself, only that it may do much good; for otherwise love would not continue to be love.

15. Hence it is plain why God Almighty is never weary of doing good; and why he is that infinite Good which never ceases to be. He is everlasting love, which cannot desist from doing good, or else he would cease to be love. Therefore, even when he punishes and chastises, he draws all good out of evil, directing it to a good end, even to our salvation.

16. This pure love of God causes us to pray aright. For as a friend has his friend at his disposal in all things, so also such a lover of God is a friend of God, and obtains from him that for which he prays. Therefore, because Lazarus's sister knew the Lord Jesus to be not only a friend, but also the Son of God, she said, "I know that

even now whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee" (John 11:22); and because Mary loved Jesus, she was heard by the Lord, and he restored her brother unto her. Of such a love as obtains from God all things, holy David saith, "Delight thyself also in the Lord, and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart." Ps. 37:4.

17. But in order that thou mayest have a characteristic mark of this love, observe these *four* properties of true love. 1. Love submits itself to the will of the beloved. 2. True love abandons all friendship which is contrary to its beloved. 3. One friend reveals his heart unto the other. 4. A true lover endeavors to be made conformable to his beloved, in his manners, and in all his life. Is the beloved poor, the lover will be poor with him. Is the beloved despised, the lover also bears his contempt. Is he sick, the lover is sick too. Thus love makes an equality between them, so that they have the same prosperity and adversity. For there must be such a communion between the lover and the beloved, as that each of them shall be made partaker of the other's good as well as ill. This, then, is not only a communion, but a union or uniting of two minds like each other, and of two hearts which are alike.

18. After such a manner our Lord Jesus Christ is become our Friend. For, 1. His love submitted itself to the will of man, and was obedient unto the cross: nay, for the sake of man he submitted his will to every one, even to his enemies. 2. He neglected all other friendship that he could have had in the world; nay, he even forgot himself, and spared not his own body and life for our sakes. 3. He revealed in his Gospel, his heart unto us; therefore he says, "Henceforth I call you not servants; but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you." John 15:15. 4. He was made alike unto us in all things, sin only excepted. Phil. 2:7. He became poor as we are, and mortal even as we.

19. If now we will be his true lovers, we must also do all these things. And seeing he was made like unto us in all things, and in all our misery, why would not we strive to be made like unto Him? If we thus love him, we shall obtain from him all things by prayer, according to his saying, "Unto him that loveth me, I will manifest myself." John 14:21. O what a friendly and delightful manifestation in the heart is there, when we experience heavenly joy, wisdom, and understanding! Here is the only right way to acquire understanding and wisdom, which are so highly praised by king Solomon in the Proverbs.

20. We are, therefore, naturally led to the conclusion, that genuine prayer cannot be offered without love.

CHAPTER XXV.

SUNDRY SIGNS BY WHICH WE MAY ASCERTAIN WHETHER WE TRULY LOVE CHRIST.

If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.—1 JOHN 2 : 15.

THE first mark that the love of Christ is in us, is the avoiding of the love of the world. When thou considerest Christ in his holy poverty, how he was so entirely empty of love to temporal things, his love will also actuate thee to learn that thou art to put off the love of the world and to despise it; so that thou wilt desire nothing here but thy Lord Jesus Christ, and wilt not put thy confidence in any creature, or earthly assistance.

2. Secondly, thou wilt willingly bear reproach and contempt from the world, for the sake of Christ's holy reproach; nay, with St. Paul, thou wilt account it thy glory, and rejoice in it. Eph. 3 : 13. Nor wilt thou be much troubled when the world makes no great account of thee; for such was thy Lord's and Redeemer's life in this world. This shall be thy full satisfaction, that Christ is thy honor, renown, glory, light, strength, power, and victory, wisdom, and skill. For to follow Christ is the highest wisdom.

3. Thirdly, seeing that Christ in his holy body and soul has suffered pain and sorrow unto death, thou also, for his love's sake, wilt not only with patience, but even with joy, suffer sorrow, persecution, distress, and affliction, nay, torment and pain unto death.

4. And, fourthly, as Christ had comfort and joy in no man nor in any creature, but only in God, according to what is said in Psalm 22, so thou also wilt bear it patiently when all worldly comfort leaves thee. For thou knowest that at last God will make thee joyful with his everlasting comfort, of which St. Paul gives us an admirable account (2 Cor. 6 : 4, etc.): "Let us approve ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in watchings, in fastings; by pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, by honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report: as deceivers, and yet true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things."

5. Fifthly, thou shalt esteem the cross of Christ as the highest good, beyond all the treasures of the world. If it were not so, Christ would not have taught thee so, and put it before thine eyes with his own life and example. Thou mayest easily believe that the Son of God would not mislead thee by his example, but conduct thee to the highest wisdom, and to the highest heavenly joys, although the way is strait and narrow. But thou seest that he himself walked in this narrow path. And because there are few that follow him, he

says, "Few there be that find it." Matt 7 : 14. For it is not an easy thing to conquer self, to deny self, to die unto self, and to renounce the world and all that we have. This is the narrow way, and few there be that find it.

6. The sixth mark of the love of Christ is, never to have the beloved Jesus out of our thoughts; but to set him always before us by faith, and to consider the works of his love.

7. As for instance: I. His *incarnation*, in which, as in a Book of Life, we see chiefly a twofold benefit: 1. That he thereby fills us with his love. And, 2. That he makes us sure of our eternal salvation and happiness. O what inexpressible love is this, that God was made man and like man, that he might make men like unto God! O the greatness of love! he took upon him the form of a servant (Phil. 2 : 6–8) that he might make us kings, and adorn us with royal crowns. O the greatness of love, that God, incomprehensible and invisible, should be made palpable and visible! Who is able to fathom the deep abyss of this love! O what great, unutterable wisdom, that out of the great evil of sin, thou, O Lord, hast brought forth such an infinite good, discovering thereby the deep abyss of thy love! O the great comfort it is to me to know that thy human birth is my divine birth, and a fountain of salvation against the deep well of sin!

8. II. His holy *doctrine*, wherein are found eternal wisdom, truth, light, life and salvation; and his holy *life*, whereby he has shown us the manner, and the way, how to live a truly Christian and godly life. For the pattern of his holy life is the most wonderful light, which will not let us walk in darkness.

9. III. The mystery of the innocent *death* of Christ, in which there are seven particulars to be considered. 1. The fulfilling of the justice of God, and of the divine sentence. 2. The satisfaction for all our sins. 3. Our reconciliation with God; for we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son. Rom. 5 : 10. 4. The manifestation of the superabundant love of God through the death of our Redeemer. 5. The eternal truth of God, that he has given us his Son, and thereby testified himself to be truly our Father. 6. The victory over all enemies. 7. The acquiring and purchase of eternal salvation and life.

10. IV. His *resurrection*, which gives us a firm assurance of the resurrection of our bodies, and also of that spiritual resurrection, wherein, through the grace of God, and the power of the life of Christ, we, having been spiritually dead, become spiritually alive in Christ. Rom. 6 : 4.

11. V. His *ascension*, which is a consummation of our eternal redemption, righteousness, and salvation.

12. These five works of the love of Christ are the true Christian school wherein we are to study, never letting them depart from our thoughts.

CHAPTER XXVI.

FIVE KINDS OF WORKS OF LOVE, IN WHICH THE GRACE AND GOODNESS OF GOD ARE ESPECIALLY REVEALED.

The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob.—Ps. 87 : 2.

THERE are chiefly five arguments of the love of God. 1. Christ's incarnation. 2. His suffering. 3. God's indwelling in us. 4. God's love shining forth out of the creatures. 5. His amiableness in his own Being, therein surpassing all created things.

2. I. Where love is, there is union; for it is the nature of love that it unites itself with the beloved. Now, as God loved man so mightily, it could not be otherwise but that he must unite himself again unto man after his fall, and out of pure love and mercy become a man. Ah! "What is man that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man that thou visitest him!" Psalm 8 : 4. The soul of man is so beloved of God, that as Christ is God and man, having united himself with human nature, with our body and soul: so also God loves our soul so much that he desires to pour himself wholly into the same, if it were perfectly purified, and man did not resist him. For there is infinite love in God, which is unutterable. This is, then, one of the greatest demonstrations of the love of God, that God is made man, and has showed himself a true lover of men, having taken upon him what is human that he might give us what is divine. He is become a Son of man, that he may make us children of God. He came down to us upon earth, that he might lift us up into heaven. O what a noble exchange! and all for this end, that we in him might be loved of God. It is as if God did call from heaven, saying: "O ye men, behold my beloved Son! Him I have suffered to become man, that he might be a living example and witness of my deep love to you; that he might bring you all with himself to me, and ye all might be made my children and heirs!" Therefore the Lord always calls himself in the Gospel the *Son of Man*, out of an intimate love to us. We seldom read that he calls himself the Son of God, but always the Son of Man, from an affectionate humility and love.

3. II. Although his holy incarnation is a very great argument of his love to us, yet his holy *suffering* and *dying* for our sins are a still greater one. For "greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." John 15 : 13. "In this was manifested the love of God towards us (saith St. John), that God sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." 1 John 4 : 9, 10. This is the highest love. Our God, according to his incomprehensible omnipotence, could have found out other means by which to redeem us; as the Lord Jesus Christ himself prayed for it in his agony, saying: "Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me." Mark 14 : 36. But then it would not have been the highest love shown to us. In order that God might bestow the highest love upon us, and that we might not be able to say, "God has something

which he loves too dearly to give it to us;" he has given us his dear Son, and not only given him, but given him also to be the propitiation for our sins. Therefore he could not have showed us greater love. Therein God commendeth his love towards us. Rom. 5 : 8. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" Rom. 8 : 32. Hath he given us that which is the greatest, he will surely give us that also which is less. In the eternal life all that is God's shall be ours. "He that overcometh shall inherit all things." Rev. 21 : 7.

4. III. Further, God shows his love to us, by his dwelling among us, and in us. O what a great comfort is this, that God has sanctified our heart, and dedicated it to be his dwelling-place. Formerly, in the Old Testament, when the tabernacle and sanctuary were finished, Moses was commanded to consecrate, to sanctify, and to sprinkle it with the blood of the sacrifice; for "almost all things were by the law purged with blood." Heb. 9 : 22. And thereupon the glory of God came from heaven, and filled the tabernacle (Exod. 40 : 34); so also, after Christ died for our sins, and after we are sanctified through his blood, God comes to us and makes his abode with us.

5. Whom we love, with him we delight to be. God loves mankind tenderly; therefore he delights to be with them, and to have his habitation among them. "I the Lord dwell in the high and holy place; with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." Isa. 57 : 15. And again, with whom we delight to be, him we tenderly love. God delights to be with men; therefore he loves men tenderly, according to the Psalm: "In the saints on earth, and in the excellent, is all my delight." Ps. 16 : 3. This assurance that God loves us and is with us, ought to comfort us in all our calamities, in poverty, in sickness, in persecution, and in contempt. What (sayest thou), doth he love them whom he suffers to come under so many crosses? I answer, Yes, that he may through the cross make them glorious. As their sufferings here abound, so also shall their consolations abound there. 2 Cor. 1 : 5. The greater afflictions are on earth, the greater joy and glory are in heaven. 2 Cor. 4 : 17.

6. And this is the reason why God makes many people sorrowful; namely, that he may dwell in their hearts; for he delights to dwell nowhere more than in a poor and contrite spirit. Ps. 34 : 19; Isa. 66 : 2. God fills us here with his grace, that he may fill us hereafter with his glory, even as he fills and illuminates the heavenly Jerusalem. Rev. 21 : 23.

7. IV. The love of God shines forth also out of the creatures. When St. Paul would desire for his Ephesians the best, the highest, and the most glorious thing, he wishes that they might know the love of God, and be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of the same. Eph. 3 : 18. He means to say so much, that the love of God is higher than heaven, deeper than the sea, broader than the earth, longer than it is from east to west, according to Psalm 103 : 11, 12. In a word, heaven and earth are full of the love of God: for all that God hath created, be it visible or invisible, he hath created for this end, that his inexpressible goodness and

love might therein be manifested. And, therefore, he hath given to man both inward and outward senses, that thereby he might perceive the goodness and love of God. For all that man can apprehend by his understanding, thoughts, mind, and reason, as well as what he apprehends with his outward senses, altogether bears witness to the love of God. All that man hath, is a testimony of the love of God; yea, all creatures, visible and invisible, are, as it were, so many messengers of God, declaring unto us his love; and he speaks to us through them, saying, "Behold the heaven and earth, and all creatures! I have created all out of love to man." And whenever we perceive the pleasantness of the creatures, we perceive the goodness of God; so that both with our inward and outward senses we can taste and see that the Lord is good, according to the words of the 34th Psalm, ver. 8.

8. The sun speaks to us by its light and warmth, as if it said: "Look upon me, the greatest and the brightest creature among all visible things: He must be great that made me." Ps. 19 : 1, etc. But not only through beautiful creatures doth God speak to us, but also through the most despicable worm, as if God did say: "Lo, thou art beholden to me thy Creator, that I, who could have made thee a worm, have, out of mercy, made thee a man." Here remember him who said: "I am a worm, and no man." Ps. 22 : 6. Thus God speaks unto man through all the creatures, declares his love to him, and invites, leads, and draws us unto himself. This is that wisdom of God which in all places uttereth "her voice in the streets," which "rejoiceth in the habitable part of the earth, and whose delights are with the sons of men." Prov. 1 : 20; 8 : 31.

9. Indeed, if we consider the matter aright, we are encompassed by the love of God, even as we are all inclosed under heaven, seeing that "in God we live, and move, and have our being." Acts 17 : 28. Man can go nowhere, but the love and goodness of God follow after him, and call him through all the creatures, nay, through his own heart and conscience, saying: "Whither wilt thou go, beloved child? Whither shalt thou flee from my presence? If thou ascendest up into heaven, I am there. If thou makest thy bed in hell, behold I am there. If thou takest the wings of the morning, and dwellest in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall my hand lead thee, and my right hand shall hold thee. Ps. 139 : 7, etc. Therefore, come unto me, and acknowledge my love and grace, with which I meet thee in every creature. Hast thou sinned, grace abounds with me; hast thou left me, my love and mercy have not yet rejected thee, but are continually hastening after thee, have been calling to thee, and, as a wandering sheep, have sought after thee. And if thou believest not these many testimonies of all the creatures, believe the testimony of my dear Son, how I have loved the world in him. John 3 : 16. Thou canst nowhere find rest for thy soul except here; turn which way thou wilt, thou must and canst only rest in my love and grace." O how blessed is the heart which understands that heaven and earth are full of the love of God, and that he has as many witnesses of his love as there are creatures! But the greatest and highest witness of all is the Son of God.

10. V. We know also the love of God, from the amiableness of his own

being. From the visions of the prophets, and the Revelation of St. John, we can observe that God Almighty is so lovely and beautiful, as infinitely to transcend all the beauty and loveliness of the world. He is the beauty of all things beautiful, and the loveliness of all things lovely, the life of all the living. He is ALL. An ancient father has said: "God is so lovely and beautiful, that if a man were in a fiery furnace, and saw the beauty and glory of Him but for a moment, the greatest torment would be changed into the greatest joy;" as it happened to St. Stephen, when he saw the glory of God, and said: "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." Acts 7 : 56. God is so lovely and beautiful, that if a man saw him for a thousand years together, it would seem to him but one hour. For in beholding the loveliness and glory of God, all time is swallowed up; so that the more any one sees God, the more he desires to see him; the more he loves God, the more he will love; and the more he praises God, the more will he praise him; according to the words of Xystus, an ancient teacher: "Devout souls can never be satiated with the love and praise of God." Hence, although the holy angels have seen God from the beginning of their creation, they have not yet seen him enough; and although they have praised him from the beginning, they have not yet praised him enough: for "God is more to be praised, than all praise can express; and more lovely, than the love of all the creatures can reach." God is infinite in his beauty, loveliness, and glory; therefore no creature can love him enough. God is so amiable, that the more one loves him, the more one desires to love him. He is so to be praised that the end of his praises cannot be attained; so lovely to be looked upon, that looking upon him never makes us weary; so comfortable to be heard, that he never can be heard enough. Tauler says, "If one might taste but a drop of the perfect love of God, all the joys and pleasures of this world would be changed to us into the greatest bitterness." The saints have endured the greatest torments for the sake of the love of God, and have given up their lives; and if they had a thousand bodies, they would hazard them all, that they might keep the love of God; as the Psalmist says, "Thy loving kindness is better than life; therefore my lips shall praise thee." Ps. 63 : 3. God is so high, so noble, and so pure a Good, that the more any one knows him, the more he loves him. He is so tender and perfect a sweetness, that the more one tastes of him, the sweeter he becomes; and the more one loves him, the more his loveliness increases. Blessed is the soul which is filled with the love of God. He will be conscious in his soul of such amiableness as cannot be found in time among creatures.

11. Behold now, ye children of men, how deceived ye are by the love of the world. What is it which any man can obtain by the love of temporal things, but sorrow, trouble, loss of time, unprofitable words (of which an account must be given), wranglings, fightings, and a burdened conscience? Surely all the children of men shall one day sorely repent that they have so much loved the world, and the things therein: according to the warning given us by St. John, saying, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world: if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust

of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." 1 John 2 : 15, etc. Therefore every man ought to mourn all the days of his life that he ever loved anything more than God only. If God pours into thy heart his love, so that thou lovest him above all things, then he has given thee the best thing he hath, even *Himself*.

CHAPTER XXVII.

SHOWING HOW THE LORD JESUS MANIFESTS HIMSELF TO THE LOVING SOUL AS THE HIGHEST LOVE AND THE HIGHEST GOOD.

To him that loveth me, I will manifest myself.—JOHN 14 : 21.

IF thou duly considerest Christ crucified thou wilt see nothing in him but pure, perfect, and unutterable love, and he will show thee his heart, and say, "Behold, in this heart there is no deceit and no lie (Isaiah 53 : 9), but the highest faithfulness and truth are there. Incline thy head unto me, and rest upon my heart; open thy mouth, and drink out of my wounds the sweetest love, which out of the heart of my Father springs up and flows through me."

2. When thou shalt have tasted this love, thou wilt forget and despise, for its sake, all the world, and be desirous of nothing else but of this love. Thou wilt say to thy Lord, "O Lord, give me nothing more than the sweetness of thy love; nay, if thou wouldst give me the whole world, I would desire nothing else but thee and thy love."

3. O happy is the soul which feels this love! for in that soul Christ is truly known, and manifested to be nothing else but pure love, and to be the love of the souls of men. These words state a most happy experience; for that Christ is the love of our soul he clearly shows by his spiritual coming and delightful refreshing of the soul; and when the soul tastes but a drop thereof it is filled with joys. For infinite love is so great that our hearts cannot comprehend it. This the holy martyr Ignatius owned, who always used to call the Lord Jesus, his Love, and said: My Love is crucified.

4. In this love of Christ all our works ought to be done (1 Cor. 16 : 14); and then they proceed from Christ out of true faith, and are well-pleasing to God, whether we eat, or drink, or sleep, or perform the duties of our calling. All that comes forth of a believing love is made pleasant to God and men; for it is done and wrought in God. John 3 : 21.

5. Although this love of Christ is the highest good in heaven and upon earth (for all good things are contained therein), yet is God so willing and ready to bestow it upon us, that he hath sent, even his dear Son, into this misery, to make us partakers in him of this inexpressible treasure, through

faith. And he is much more ready to give us this precious good than we are to receive it.

6. This love, "shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost" (Rom. 5 : 5), when felt in us, affords us more joy than all the world can give. And if all creatures were present, a believing and loving soul would part with them, yea, not so much as look upon them, because of the superabundant sweetness of the love of God. And if all creatures should begin to speak, the voice of the love of God would be stronger and more delightful than the voice of all the creatures. For this love binds and unites the mind unto Christ, and replenishes it with all good. This precious good is indeed known, seen, and tasted in the spirit, but no words can express it. All words are much too weak to set forth even the shadow thereof; and no man's tongue can reach that precious and lovely good of which the spirit of man is sensible. Therefore also St. Paul says, that he heard in paradise words that were "unspeakable." 2 Cor. 12 : 4.

7. And when this precious good withdraws from the soul, there is then greater sorrow than if all the world had been lost. Then the soul calls and cries, "O thou delightful love, I have scarcely tasted of thee; why dost thou forsake me? My soul is as a child that is weaned of his mother Ps. 131 : 2. Oh, thy loving-kindness is better than life! (Ps. 63 : 3); let me taste thereof. My soul thirsteth for thee (Ps. 42 : 2) only, and nothing else can satisfy me, or make me joyful."

This holy love causes also, that without it the whole life is imbittered to a believing and loving soul, and is accounted as death and misery. Yea, for the sake of this love, man desires to die, to put off the earthly tabernacle, and to be at home, and present with the Lord, according to the words of St. Paul. 2 Cor. 5 : 8.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

SHOWING HOW THE HIGHEST GOOD IS PERCEIVED AND TASTED IN THE SOUL.

O taste and see that the Lord is good.—Ps. 34 : 8.

GOD is an eternal, perfect, infinite, substantial, communicative Good, full of love and joy; and therefore he desires to be known in living faith, in spirit, and in truth. This cannot however be, except a man really taste and feel in his heart the goodness, sweetness, loving-kindness, and comfort of God.

2. If this were to be performed there must needs be in man something conformable to God, and capable of knowing him, that so we might be made partakers of the highest good. Now this is the soul of man: into the soul God was willing to pour forth his goodness, yea, to dwell there, and to manifest and make known himself more and more.

3. But since man has lost this sovereign good by sin, and the devil has obtained a habitation in, and posses-

sion of, him; working in man all his own works, as pride, covetousness, lust, anger, envy; man, therefore, "through the faith of the operation of God" (Col. 2:12), must be turned again from the world unto God, from Satan unto Jesus Christ (Acts 26:18), and Satan with his works must be driven out and be utterly dispossessed. As long as Satan works in man, God works not in him; His works are hindered, so that the soul cannot taste that God is good. Indeed, the reason why there are so few that know God aright is, that in the greatest number of men the works of darkness and of Satan have the ascendency. The most part adhere to the world, to the creatures, and to themselves.

4. But they who will rightly know and taste the Lord's goodness, must be joined unto him, and be one spirit with him. 1 Cor. 6:17. And the more this is done the more does God manifest himself in the believing, loving soul; the more the heart is turned from the world unto God, the more God is united to the soul. All love to the world and to the creature must be turned out, if the love of God ever enter in. "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." 1 John 2:15. Where God finds a soul empty of the world, he fills it with heaven, with himself, and with all his goodness. The more the heart is emptied of love to the world, the more God fills it with his light and comfort. "Therefore," as an ancient father says, "in an empty, still, and quiet soul, it can be better felt than expressed what God is."

5. If then a man would really know that God is good, even the highest Good, he must taste his goodness in his heart. The Scripture testifies thereof outwardly, but the heart must feel it inwardly, and must taste the living word. It must "taste the good word of God and the powers of the world to come." Heb. 6:5. Thou canst never better understand that God is kind and loving, than when thou feelest his comfort. None can better teach thee that God is a Being full of joy than God himself, when he rejoices in thee. And so it is also with all other things of God. If he do not perform, and himself work all in thee, thou wilt never come to a living knowledge of him. "To know God without God, is impossible," says St. Augustine. Therefore, that man will never be able to know rightly what God is, unto whom God does not make known and manifest himself. But when a heart feels the living word of God, then it knows and understands that God is all, all-good, and the true, perfect, eternal Good, and better than all for which any heart can wish or desire.

6. When this is known and tasted in the soul, according to the words of Psalm 63:3, "Lord, thy loving-kindness is better than life;" then the soul begins to scorn the world with its joys and pleasures. She has in God satisfaction, even full satisfaction, and, in short, ALL. For the world, with all that is in it, is made up only of individual things, which are imperfect and inconstant; but God is the true, perfect, universal, and eternal unchangeable Good.

7. For this reason David says, "Whom have I in heaven but thee, O Lord? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee." Ps. 73:25. This is the language of a soul which has tasted the perfect good, from which all love to the world and creatures is removed, and which has no pleasure nor delight in the world and in earthly things, but in God alone, the highest

Good. And this is the true, sensible, and experimental knowledge of God, nay, the true love of God above all things, which is felt and tasted in the heart; for when God is rightly known, he is loved, praised, and honored above all things.

8. Now, if we have the eternal, perfect good, wherein there is all good, and which alone is ALL, why should we love that which is imperfect? For where the true, perfect good is known, there it is also beloved above all imperfect things, that is, above all creatures whatsoever.

9. Thus the living knowledge of God expels the love of the world; and thus man begins to despise the world, with all the vanities thereof, saying, with King Solomon, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity;" nay, all under the sun "is vexation of spirit." Eccles. 1 : 2, 14. Thus love to the world is abolished in the heart, and there remains only love to God, and to the eternal good which abideth for ever.

CHAPTER XXIX.

SHOWING HOW THE LOVING SOUL CONSIDERS GOD IN HIS BENEFITS AS THE MOST LIBERAL BOUNTIFULNESS.

In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.—1 John 4 : 9, 10.

ALL that God does with reference to man, be it benefits or punishments, he does to this end, that man, who is turned away from him, may be turned to him again.

2. But man is foolish and brutish, like the beasts (Ps. 32 : 9), and does not understand the reason for which God bestows upon him so great benefits, namely, that thereby he might be invited and encouraged to love God: nor does he, on the other hand, consider why God punishes him, namely, that he may turn himself unto God.

3. Let us consider, first, bodily and temporal benefits, and then those that are spiritual and eternal.

4. I. God has created nothing, either visible or invisible, which may not be serviceable to man. The invisible creatures which minister to us, are the holy angels (Heb. 1 : 14), whose wisdom, strength, diligence, and watchfulness over us, are declared and praised in many places of Scripture; so that even many angels wait upon one man: witness the history of the patriarch Jacob and the prophet Elisha. Gen. 32 : 1, 2; 2 Kings 6 : 17. Because many evil spirits lie in wait for one man, seeking to destroy him; therefore also many holy watchers are ordered by God for his defence. That there is joy also in the presence of the angels, over our repentance and prayers, the Lord teaches us. Luke 15 : 10. This benefit, because it is bestowed upon us after an invisible manner, many people little consider; but a wise man, who considers not only the visible world, but the

invisible also, understands well, that in the invisible world, wherein God dwelleth, there is much greater glory, and there are much greater numbers or hosts, and greater principalities and dominions (Col. 1 : 16) than in this visible world. And as God makes his own ministers and princes defend and watch over us, it is plain that this is an exceedingly great benefit; even as that is to be accounted an honor and favor, when a prince appoints his own ministers to conduct and defend one that is to travel through a wilderness or through a hostile country.

5. Look upon the firmament, and consider how God has appointed it for thy service. Behold the wondrous course of the sun and moon. Why do they run so incessantly, day and night, and rest not so much as for one moment? Gen. 1 : 16; Ps. 19 : 6. Are they not diligent and industrious servants of man? For God hath no need of their service; he wants not their operations nor their light; it is for man that they were created. The sun serves thee as an unwearied servant, which every morning rises early, and carries before thee the beautiful light, and puts thee in remembrance of the eternal light, which is Christ, and his divine word; this shall be the light of thy soul, that thou mayest walk as a child of the light. The moon and the night cover thee with a shadow, bringing rest unto thee, and teaching thee to abide and to dwell under the shadow of the Most High. Ps. 91 : 1. The moon, like an unwearied handmaid, conducts water to fertilize the earth. Nay, there is not a star which does not shine, and has not received some blessing for the benefit of man.

6. Behold the air and the winds, how clear they make the firmament, dispelling the clouds; or they gather them together and cause them to pour forth afterwards upon the earth. It is very wonderful that God "bindeth up the waters in his thick clouds, and the cloud is not rent under them." Job 26 : 8. The air bears and sustains the clouds, those moist vapors which are afterwards resolved into small drops of water. Job 36 : 27. Thunder, lightnings, and hail (Job 37 : 3), must lead us to acknowledge the power of God, to pray to him, and to thank him when he has preserved us in a terrible tempest. Ps. 18 : 8, 13, 14.

7. Behold the various winds which govern navigation; so that where a wind blows, there the ship is driven, and sails on her way as a bird flies through the air. Thus all places of the world can be found out, and all the secrets thereof discovered, that nothing may be kept hid of what God hath created for the benefit of man.

8. Behold the various kinds of fish in the sea. Gen. 1 : 20, 21; Ps. 104 : 25. They have their appointed times and seasons, in which they, as it were, rise out of the depths and present themselves, crowded together as the corn in the field, as if they would say, Now we are in season, now is the time of harvest for the sea; gather therefore, O ye men! And so it is with the birds also; when their time is come, they fly together in great multitudes, and show themselves to mankind.

9. Behold the earth, that great storehouse of food and treasury of God. It furnishes forth meat and drink, medicine and clothing, houses and abodes, and all the various metals. Each month produces its flowers, which present themselves to our notice, as if they would say, Here we are; we bring our gifts, and present them to

you, as good as we received them from our Creator. Nay, even the forest, which is the habitation of roving beasts, God hath put under man, and made him to have dominion over them. And were we to attempt to enumerate all the temporal benefits of God, we should find it impossible to number only them that are in one particular country. There is no fruit, but it is a benefit of God; and let man enumerate them, one by one, if he be able. Should not we learn from this to know our good and bountiful God? Ps. 65:10, 11. If a great potentate were to subject to thee his whole kingdom, and all his dominions, nobles, and powerful men, nay, all his subjects, and were to command them to guard, defend, preserve, clothe, cure, and feed thee, and to take care that thou want nothing at all, wouldest thou not love him and account him a loving, bountiful lord? How then oughtest thou to love the Lord thy God, who has reserved nothing for himself, but appointed for thy service all that is in heaven, or comes from heaven, and all that is upon earth. He needs no creatures for himself, and has excepted nothing from thy service, neither in all the hosts of holy angels, nor in any of his creatures under the stars. If we but desire it, they are ready to serve us; nay, hell itself must serve us by bringing upon us fear and terror, that we may not sin; and by punishing and tormenting our enemies and all the wicked, more than man can desire.

10. II. Let us, upon this ladder of the creatures, ascend unto God our Creator, and consider his spiritual benefits. Has not the Holy Trinity, each Person in particular, bestowed upon man great grace and beneficence? The Father has given us his own Son, and "how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" Rom. 8:32. Has not God the Son given us himself, and all he is, and all he has? "God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Rom. 5:8. Is not the Holy Ghost within us, illuminating, purifying, teaching, comforting, and adorning our souls with his gifts? He "beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God." Rom. 8:16.

11. In a word, God's mercy pours forth itself entirely upon us, and omits nothing whereby men could be moved to love God. The benefits God bestows upon us, are so many messengers which he sends for inviting us to come and to enjoy his love. If thou shouldest ask the Scriptures, the angels, all the prophets and all the saints of God, nay, all creatures besides, "From whence come you?" they would answer, "We are the messengers of the mercy of God; we carry fire and flames, that the heart of man, which is cold and incrusted, as it were, with ice, might be warmed again by the love of God." Yet all these numbers of flaming messengers of God are not able to warm the dead, cold, and frozen heart. This, therefore, is the greatest wonder the devil can effect, that he makes a human heart so cold, that warmth cannot be raised therein, by so many flames of the love of God.

12. Therefore, hearken, thou human heart, and consider where thy Creator has placed thee: namely, in the middle of so many fiery benefits, where the glorious angels surround thee with their flaming love, and where there are so many creatures and messengers of God, all proclaiming his love unto thee. Wherein now has God Almighty transgressed against thee? Whereby

has he deserved, that thou shouldst not, or canst not, love and praise him? If what he has done for thee be too little, behold, he offers to do still more. He will create for thee a new heaven and a new earth, and will build a new, glorious, heavenly city, which his glory will lighten; nay, he will illuminate thee with his own light and glory. Rev. 21:10, etc. Could a young woman be so cold, as not to love a fair and youthful bridegroom, whose beauty and goodness were praised day and night, nay, who had delivered her from death, and adorned her with the fairest ornaments? Therefore know, thou human soul, how cold the devil has made thee, since thou canst not be at all warmed by the love of God.

13. And since God has implanted love in all human hearts, tell me, if thy love could be bought of thee, to whom wouldest thou sell it rather than to the Lord thy God? But thinkest thou, that God has not bought of thee thy love dear enough, and has not paid for it a price sufficient? Hath He not given thee his dear Son for it, and Heaven and Earth besides? All that thou expectest to gain for thy love from the world, is as nothing, in comparison with what God has given thee, and what He further has prepared for them that love him. 1 Cor. 2:9; Isa. 64:4. The world, perhaps, gives thee a handful of honor and riches, accompanied with many troubles, and yet thou lovest it! Why dost thou not rather love God, the everlasting Good? But if thy love is not to be bought or sold, but rather will bestow itself freely upon that which thou likest best, what can love find that is to be esteemed more than the supreme, eternal, and most glorious Good? Everything we love, is our beauty and ornament: and if thou lovest God, thou shalt make him thereby thy beauty and thy ornament. And since that is lovely which is beautiful, nothing can ever make thee more lovely and comely, than the love of God in thy soul.

14. And lastly, it is but just and reasonable, that we should love him "who first loved us." 1 John 4:19. Take account of all the benefits of God, and sum them up; so shalt thou find that all creatures are full of the love of God. This love follows and surrounds thee everywhere, so that thou canst not be rid of it, nor hide thyself from it. It is too powerful and overcometh thee; thou must enjoy it whether thou wilt or not, unless thou wouldest live no more.

15. Now we know that brutes love those by whom they are loved; wouldest thou be worse than a brute, hating thy Benefactor, in whose love thou livest and movest, standest and walkest, sleepest and wakest? But as a thing that is to be kindled, must be held to the fire till it take the flame: so also art thou to expose thy heart to the fire of the love of God, till it be kindled and inflamed therein, which is effected by continual contemplations of the benefits of God. As formerly the priests were commanded to kindle the sacrifices by the holy fire (Lev. 6:12), so must the eternal High Priest Jesus Christ, kindle the sacrifice of thine heart, by the fire of his Holy Spirit. And this holy fire of his love was burning toward us from eternity; for He loved us before the foundation of the world. Since that, it has gloriously shown forth itself in the Lord's incarnation and birth; and chiefly in his sufferings and death, whereby He has bestowed upon us the highest love; and this fire of his

flaming love to us will not be extinguished to all eternity. Near this fire continue thou with thy cold heart, that thou mayest be kindled with, and united to, the love of Christ.

CHAPTER XXX.

SHOWING HOW GOD MANIFESTS HIMSELF TO THE LOVING SOUL, AS THE SUPREME BEAUTY.

O Lord my God, thou art very great: thou art clothed with honor and majesty; who coverest thyself with light as with a garment.—Ps. 104: 1, 2.

AS nothing is more lovely to a loving soul than Christ, and no good higher or more precious than God himself; so there is also nothing more *beautiful* in the sight of such a one than God. That soul looks upon God as the highest beauty, with which nothing in heaven and earth is to be compared; so that all the holy angels cannot sufficiently praise to all eternity this beauty of God. If all the holy angels in their lustre, and all the elect in their glory, were put together, it would nevertheless appear, that all their beauty and splendor proceed from God, who is the eternal glory and beauty; and that they are derived from the everlasting, infinite light and brightness. For as God is all good, and the highest good, so He is also all beauty, ornament, and glory.

2. And when a man beholds in spirit the glory of God, he forgets all the creatures, nay, the beauty of all the angels also; and mourns over nothing so much, as that he has offended this great Good with his wickedness, and this infinite eternal beauty and brightness with his impurity.

3. But because the Son of God, the brightness of his glory (Heb. 1: 3), is become man, He hath made men partakers of his divine nature, and of his comeliness (2 Pet. 1: 4), so that all who are in Christ by faith, are comely and glorious before God. Ps. 16: 3. He remembers our defects and filthiness no more; for although his eyes see, yet the brightness of his glory, and the love of Christ cover them. Eph. 5: 27.

4. The wise heathen Plato, considering the beauty of the creatures, of the luminaries, of the firmament, of the flowers in the fields, of the metals and animals, has by his reason drawn the conclusion, that God must of necessity be an eternal Being, beautiful above all things, because the beauty of all the creatures must be comprehended or concentrated in Him. But we say from the word of God, and the holy Evangelist St. John: "It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know, that when He shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3: 2); that we then, being perfectly renewed after the likeness of God, shall really be an image, like unto God, through which his beauty, brightness, and glory will shine; but out of Jesus Christ our Lord, in the highest brightness and beauty of all. For in him is all ful-

ness; and so it has pleased the Father that "in him should all fulness dwell" (Col. 1: 19); and that "in him should be gathered together in one all things, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth" (Eph. 1: 10); which no finite creature can comprehend.

5. Therefore angels and men shall admire the brightness and beauty of Christ, especially the chosen children of God, "whose vile bodies shall be fashioned like unto his glorious body." Phil. 3 : 21. And this is what Daniel says, "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever." Dan. 12 : 3. And as the 104th Psalm, ver. 2, says of God, "Thou coverest thyself with light," so our covering or garment will also be nothing else but light and brightness.

CHAPTER XXXI.

SHOWING HOW GOD MANIFESTS HIMSELF TO THE LOVING SOUL AS THE INFINITE OMNIPOTENCE.

O Lord God of hosts, who is a strong Lord like unto thee? or to thy faithfulness round about thee?—Ps. 89 : 8.

THE love of God wills, that a loving soul should do good to all men, and be profitable both to foes and friends; not for the sake of its own profit and honor, but only for the sake of the love of God, which, as it were, moves his omnipotence to draw nigh unto us; which also, from its infinite treasure, gives us all we have, to the end that we should give again from love what the love of God has given us out of the treasury of his omnipotence.

2. Therefore, O man, be careful that thou appropriate nothing to thyself, but restore all to the omnipotence of God, who himself is all that thou hast and art. No creature can either give to, or take away from, thee; it is only the omnipotence of God which can do it. Nor can any creature comfort thee; the love of God alone can do it.

3. In this love, the loving soul sees the fulness of God's incomprehensible omnipotence, which comprehends in itself heaven and earth, the sea and the dry land, but cannot be comprehended by any thing. For the whole world is to the omnipotence of God "as a drop of a bucket, and as the small dust of the balance." Isa. 40 : 15.

4. And out of this fulness of God's omnipotence, all the powers of angels, men, and all other creatures, proceed. It sustains the firmament of Heaven. The motions of the sea and the powers of the earth proceed from it; so that heaven and earth are full of God, full of the divine power and operation, full of the Spirit of the Lord. The power of God, which is the might of his love, comprehends, incloses, and replenishes all things, but is comprehended by none. Ps. 139 : 2, etc.

5. As high as God is over all things, so deeply also is he in all things, and all things are in him, according to St. Paul, who says, "Of him, and through him, and to him, are all things" (Rom. 11 : 36); and again, "Who is above

all, and through all, and in you all." Eph. 4 : 6.

6. Since God is so great and over all things, nothing surely can be equal to him; and he that will be so, makes himself a god, commits the greatest sin, and falls into the pit of perdition. And since God is all, all that is without him must be as nothing. Therefore from God's omnipotence, man learns to know his own nothingness, and to fear God, who delights in them only that "humble themselves under his mighty hand." 1 Peter 5 : 6.

7. Now as great and high as God is in his omnipotence, even so low is he made by his love. Behold our Lord Jesus Christ, the living Son, the powerful arm of God, by whom were all things created, and by whom all things consist (1 Col. 1 : 16, 17); how deeply has he descended by his love, and how lowly and humble has he made himself among all creatures!

8. Therefore, even as we cannot fathom, much less express in words, the omnipotence of God; so neither can we fathom with our thoughts the humility and lowliness of Christ. Nevertheless, as deep as is his descent, so high is also his ascent far above all heavens. Eph. 4 : 10. Unto him be honor and praise to all eternity. Amen.

O God! O Jesus! O blessed Spirit! Thou unchangeable mind! Thou inextinguishable light! Thou Peace which cannot be disturbed! Thou indivisible unity! Thou infallible truth! Thou ineffable bounty! Thou immeasurable might! Thou infinite wisdom! Thou incomprehensible Goodness! Thou omnipresent eternity! Thou Life of all the living! Do Thou enlighten me, do Thou sanctify me, do Thou quicken me!

CHAPTER XXXII.

SHOWING HOW THE LOVING SOUL KNOWS GOD AS THE HIGHEST RIGHTEOUSNESS AND HOLINESS.

Thy righteousness is like the great mountains; thy judgments are a great deep.—Ps. 36 : 6.

ALL who love God acknowledge him to be the highest and most holy righteousness, which pervades all, and is over all. This in God is his most holy will; in angels holy obedience; in man, the testimony of his conscience; in all creatures, it is the order of nature, whereby God has ordered all things in number, weight, and measure. All that is done against this order, is contrary to God and nature.

2. All sins, therefore, in the world, are committed against God's righteousness, and the sinner thereby offends all creatures, even all the angels in heaven, and his own conscience, and sets them in hostility against himself. For when God is offended and provoked to anger, all creatures are also offended and made angry; so, too, when God is reconciled, all creatures are reconciled also, and rejoice over such a man. Hence St. Paul says,

that all things are reconciled by Christ, whether they be "things in earth or things in heaven" (Col. 1 : 20): and this, because God is reconciled through him. Therefore the Lord says, "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." Luke 15 : 10. The angels rejoice for man's own sake.

3. But if God be not reconciled to man, all creatures, angels, and nature itself, execute vengeance upon him. Hence come the dreadful judgments of God: and it is impossible to avert such vengeance and judgments. "Thou art to be feared, O God; and who may stand in thy sight when once thou art angry? Thou didst cause judgment to be heard from heaven; the earth feared, and was still." Ps. 76 : 7, 8. Thus may we see in the plagues of Egypt how all creatures executed vengeance upon the wicked.

4. From the most holy righteousness of God, when offended, proceeds also the curse; as Moses, the man of God, witnesses, when he speaks of the transgression of the divine law. Deut. 27 : 15, etc.

5. It is a curse when the justice of God executes such vengeance, that the cursed cannot enjoy any good, either from God or the creature, but is made an "abhorring unto all flesh." Isa. 66 : 24. "A curse is a liableness and condemnation unto eternal misery." Therefore a curse is terrible and dreadful unto all creatures, so that they cannot endure it. And this is the highest vengeance of the justice of God.

6. From the most holy righteousness of God proceed also those wonderful, unsearchable, secret, dreadful judgments, whereof David says, "Thy judgments are a great deep" (Ps. 36 : 7); and St. Paul, "How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" Rom. 11 : 33.

7. When, therefore, we consider them, we see therein the righteousness of God, of which the man of God, Moses, says, "To me belongeth vengeance, and recompense," saith the Lord. "If I whet my glittering sword, and mine hand take hold on judgment, I will render vengeance to mine enemies, and will reward them that hate me. Rejoice, O ye nations, with his people! for he will avenge the blood of his servants, and will render vengeance to his adversaries, and will be merciful unto his land and to his people." Deut. 32: 35, 41, 43.

8. In these words, Moses declares the vengeance of God upon all the wicked, who resist the righteousness of God. Against them God will whet his glittering sword; that is, his dreadful sentence and judgment, at which the earth feareth, and is still. Ps. 76 : 8. And him, upon whom God executes his vengeance and judgment, all the world cannot save; according to the words of the Psalm: "O Lord God, to whom vengeance belongeth; O God, to whom vengeance belongeth, shew thyself. Lift up thyself, thou Judge of the earth; render a reward to the proud." Ps. 94 : 1, 2. Here we read that although the Lord God is a gracious, loving, kind, merciful, long-suffering God, to all them that fear him, he is nevertheless a just judge, according to his righteousness, of all the wicked that transgress against his righteousness.

9. He, therefore, sets before us in his word, not only instances of his grace and mercy, but also of his justice and vengeance; such as those of the deluge, Sodom and Gomorrah, Pharaoh in Egypt, and in the Red Sea; Korah, Dathan, and Abiram;

Saul, Ahithophel, Ahab, Jezebel, Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, Sennacherib; and in the New Testament, Herod, and many more; in every one of whom, we may see the wonderful judgment and vengeance of God. Therefore he is called, a *God of vengeance*, "unto whom vengeance belongeth," because he is the most holy, and the most righteous God; nay, righteousness itself. Therefore, the saints (Rev. 6:10) appeal to the justice of God with a loud voice, saying: "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?"

10. Such judgments of God are executed daily, but are rightly understood only by believing and holy souls, according to the words of the Psalm: "With thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked." Ps. 91:8. This saying is not to be understood according to carnal passions and affections, but it is to be considered spiritually; for it imports that we are to give unto the Lord our God, the praise of his righteousness; and to say, "Righteous art thou, O Lord, and upright are thy judgments" (Ps. 119:137); and "The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works." Ps. 145:17. Thus holy and believing souls delight to see the wonderful judgments of God; yet not according to the flesh, so as to rejoice over the destruction and perdition of the wicked (which would proceed from self-revenge); but, according to the spirit, they take delight, that is, they acknowledge and praise the righteousness of God, who fulfilleth his word, and is a righteous God. And at the same time, they lament and weep over the perdition of the wicked, even as our Saviour wept over Jerusalem (Luke 19:41); and as David wept over Absalom. 2 Sam. 18:33.

11. So, then, we are here to have a twofold respect, namely, to God and to men. If we look upon the destruction of men, we are justly to be sorrowful; but if we look upon God, we are to praise his justice, for he doeth wrong unto none. Ps. 92:15.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

SHOWING HOW THE LOVING SOUL CONSIDERS GOD AS THE ETERNAL WISDOM.

Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.—Acts 15:18.

GOD ordains, governs, moves, and regulates all things according to his unsearchable wisdom, as it is written (Isa. 45:4–12): "I have even called thee by thy name; I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me. I am the Lord, and there is none else, there is no God besides me.—I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil; I the Lord do all these things. —Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou? or thy work, He hath no hands? Woe unto him that saith unto his father, What begettest thou? or to the woman, What hast thou brought forth? Thus saith the

Lord, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker, Ask me of things to come concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands command ye me. I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded."

2. This is a powerful testimony concerning the eternal wisdom, and the wondrous, incomprehensible government of Almighty God, which may be first observed in this, that he has called every one of us by his name, and has surnamed us, though we did not know him, and were not yet in being. This our name by which God calleth us, is our faith, our outward calling, and our whole course of life. There we are inclosed in, or surrounded with, God's eternal wisdom and providence, as it respects our whole life, its beginning, middle, and end (Ps. 139 : 16), or as to our going out and coming in. Ps. 121 : 8. "He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names" (Ps. 147 : 4); that is, he gives them their courses, powers, and operations. How much more doth he so in reference to men! God forms the light and creates darkness. He makes peace, and creates evil; that is, as to the evil of punishment, the just reward of sin; this he creates and permits; nay, he calls the sword, and causes an alarm of war to be heard. Jer. 49 : 2.

3. In a word, he ordains all things wisely. He sees and hears all things before, according to the words of the Psalmist: "Understand, ye brutish among the people: and ye fools, when will ye be wise? He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? He that formed the eye, shall he not see? He that chastiseth the heathen, shall not he correct? He that teacheth man knowledge, shall not he know?" Ps. 94 : 8–10.

4. Here king David teaches us that God has laid a mirror of his omniscience and eternal wisdom into man, into the hearing ear, and seeing eye, those two wonderful powers of the human body.

5. It is extremely offensive to a man, to hear and see anything unjust or unreasonable; how much more to God, who has an all-seeing eye and an all-hearing ear, must men's ingratitude be offensive; he having ordained all things by his wisdom, in order to be serviceable unto men. He has made the sun by his wisdom to give light, not unto itself, but to us; the water affords drink, not to itself, but unto us; the earth brings forth fruits, not for itself, but for us; the fire warms, not for itself, but for us; the air gives breath, not to itself, but to us; the bread feeds, not itself, but us; the herbs do not heal themselves, but us.

6. The eternal wisdom of God has planted so many powers in the creatures, and has so wisely distributed them, that they are, as it were, so many hands through which the wisdom and goodness of God divide these treasures among us, according to the words of Job: "Who knoweth not in all these, that the hand of the Lord hath wrought this? In whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind." Job 12 : 9, 10. And "Ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee" (ver. 7); that "with God is wisdom and strength, he hath counsel and understanding. Behold, he breaketh down, and it cannot be built again: he shutteth up a man, and there can be no opening." Ver. 13, 14. "He stretcheth out the north over the empty place,

and hangeth the earth upon nothing. He bindeth up the waters in his thick clouds, and the cloud is not rent under them." Job 26 : 7, 8.

7. Since then the Lord our God ordaineth all things by his wisdom, he ordaineth all our crosses; and therefore we are not to murmur, but to praise his wisdom, and to learn patience; for things cannot proceed otherwise than as they are ordained by God. But not only the things that befall us in particular, are the most wise order of God; but also all great national plagues, famine, pestilence, wars, and revolutions of states. And although we may think that these are nothing but confusion, perdition, and destruction, yet there reigns the wisest order of God. This we may gather from the histories of Holy Writ, where famine, wars, pestilence, desolations of the kingdoms of the world, the destruction of the Jewish kingdom, and of empires, the Babylonian Captivity, and many similar events, are described. "I know," saith Solomon (Eccles. 3 : 14), "that whatsoever God doeth, it shall be forever: nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before him."

8. And again, "Consider the work of God; for who can make that straight, which he hath made crooked?" Eccles. 7 : 13.

9. If we consider it aright, we must own that God could not have ordered things more wisely. So we may say also, with reference to the persecutions of the saints, both in the Old and New Testament; to our Lord Jesus Christ; the holy Gospel; the holy martyrs; and all other things. In our sight, these all seem to be absurd, and foolish, and yet they are the highest wisdom of God.

10. As then we are to give unto God the praise of righteousness, in all his wonderful judgments; so we are also to give unto him the praise of wisdom, in all the wonderful changes of the world, and in all our crosses and sufferings; knowing that he can direct all evils to a good end, and out of evil derive good: so that in all things, how confused soever they may appear unto us, there shineth forth his wisdom, even as his righteousness doth in all his judgments.

11. But the loving soul sees the wisdom of God especially in the restoration and redemption of the human race, and in the renovation of the soul and the faculties thereof. For so it pleased the wisdom of God, that the corrupt image of God in man, should be renewed by the divine substantial image of God, that is, by Christ. After man had lost by sin that blessed wisdom, that glorious light of his *intellect*, by which he knew God aright, and so had fallen into the utmost blindness, nay, into eternal darkness, wherein he must have dwelt forever; the Son of God, who is the eternal wisdom of the Father, became man, and a light of life unto men (John 1: 4), that he might bring back those that had gone astray; that he might teach the ignorant; call to himself the sinners; and rekindle in them the light of the knowledge of God by faith and the Holy Ghost; nay, that he might unite himself to the soul of man, and might shine forth therein.

12. Secondly: after the *will* of man was entirely turned away from God, perverted, and wholly changed into disobedience, striving against God in all things; the Son of God was made man, that he might be unto us a pattern of perfect obedience; that he might heal our evil will; implant his

good will in our hearts; renew our will through the Holy Ghost; and make us partakers of his holy obedience by faith; according to those words of Scripture (Gal. 3 : 14), "That we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith;" nay, that he might unite himself to us, and live in us, that so our will also might be made conformable unto God.

13. Thirdly: because the *affections* of our hearts, and all our faculties, were in contrariety to God, and "every imagination of the thoughts of our hearts, was only evil continually" (Gen. 6 : 5); the Son of God, who is love itself, became man, that he might give us a heart wholly new; that he might plant therein the love of God, and sincere humility and meekness; that he might take from us the old carnal heart, and unite himself with us, that so we might be made of one heart, mind, and spirit with him; all which are the fruits of his most holy incarnation wrought in us.

14. And this is the highest wisdom of God, that by his dear Son, He thus reneweth man. For as God has created man by his wisdom, after his perfect image; so He hath also, by his dear Son, who is eternal wisdom, and who was made man, created man anew, and regenerated him to a new image of God, wherein his wisdom, glory, and righteousness should shine forth forever. It is in this chiefly that the image of God consists.

15. Thus the corrupt image of God in man, is renewed by the substantial image of God, which is Christ.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

SHOWING HOW A MAN SHOULD SEEK THE WISDOM OF GOD BY PRAYER; CONTAINING ALSO A USEFUL TREATISE ON PRAYER, WHEREIN THE READER IS TAUGHT HOW THE HEART IS TO BE MOVED UNTO PRAYER, AND BROUGHT INTO A QUIET SABBATH, SO THAT PRAYER MAY BE WROUGHT IN US BY THE LORD; THE WHOLE BEING SET FORTH IN TWELVE SECTIONS.

SECTION I.

ALL THAT WE HAVE LOST IN ADAM WE RECOVER FULLY AND COMPLETELY IN CHRIST.

In Christ are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.—COL. 2 : 3.

IN the beginning God formed man out of the dust of the earth, and breathed into him the breath of life, and man became a living and immortal soul, adorned with perfect wisdom, righteousness, holiness, and blessedness, after the image of his Creator. For where there is divine wisdom, there is blessedness; and where there is blessedness there is divine wisdom. Man, therefore, wanted nothing in Paradise to make him completely happy. But when, being seduced by the temptation of the serpent, he turned away from God, and fell into sin, then was this divine image in man effaced, and he became subject to the devil, to death, and to misery. For as soon as this divine image was defaced in him by sin, he could dis-

cover nothing in himself but misery, blindness, and the curse.

2. But in order that Adam, that is, all men in Adam, might not utterly perish, God himself was made man; that is, he was pleased to send his Son to take our nature upon him, and to be born of a virgin. The Son of God has, by his holy life and doctrine, as by a pattern, shown us again the way of wisdom and salvation in which we are to walk. For he has not only delivered us from our sins by his most bitter death, but has moreover given us a commandment, that "we should walk, even as he also walked." 1 John 2 : 6.

3. We are, therefore, begotten again by him, through faith, to be the sons of God; nay, we are made sons of God in and with his own Son. For "as he is, so are we also in this world." 1 John 4 : 17.

4. In this Son "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden." For whatsoever was lost in Adam, is perfectly to be found in Christ. Rom. 5 : 18, 19.

5. If we would, in this life, have a foretaste of these great and glorious treasures, it must be obtained by prayer, diligent searching, and continual knocking. For no man can have admission into the kingdom of God, unless he walk in the new birth, and seek it earnestly of God. No man can be delivered from the power of sin and the devil, unless he repent, and offer up his prayers in the name of Christ. For though Christ has purchased for us all good things, yet without faith no man can be partaker of them; in and by faith he must also pray, seek, and knock. In a word, it is by prayer only that we can obtain those "good and perfect gifts which come down from above, from the Father of lights." James 1 : 17.

A PRAYER.

O Eternal God and Father, teach me, I beseech thee, by thy Holy Spirit, that even as I have lost all by dying in Adam, so I may recover all by being made alive again in Christ. Grant that I may daily die to myself, by continual mortification and repentance, and devote and give myself up entirely to thee; that so all the good things which I have lost may be restored to me, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SECTION II.

THE EVILS THAT FOLLOW THE NEGLECT OF PRAYER.

Ye have not, because ye ask not.—James 4 : 2.

1. The neglect of prayer is a violation of the *commandments* of Christ, who commands us to "pray without ceasing" (Matt. 7 : 7; Luke 18 : 1), not for His sake, for he well knows what we stand in need of (Matt. 6: 32); but for our own, that we may have a portion of the treasures and inheritance of God. He that lives in the neglect of prayer is a breaker of the first and second commandments, even as to blaspheme God is to bring voluntary destruction upon himself.

2. He that neglects the duty of prayer is a despiser of the *promises* annexed to the performance of that duty. "Call upon me, and I will deliver thee" (Ps. 50: 15); "Ask, and ye shall receive" (John 16 : 24); for he thereby represents God as unmindful of his promises, or as not able to fulfil them.

3. By the neglect of prayer, our faith, which is the great treasure and foundation of the inward man, by de-

grees decays and perishes. For not by the arm or power of flesh, but by faith in Christ, can we conquer sin, death, and the devil. 1 John 5 : 4. Prayer is the nourishment of faith; and this is that wisdom and eternal life which we must seek for by diligent prayer.

4. The Lord Jesus departs from them that despise prayer; so that they are blinded and walk in darkness, knowing neither themselver nor God, but are strangers to his will. They shut the kingdom of heaven against themselves; and, being destitute of light to know the will of God, they fall into many dangers and temptations, and sometimes into despair: whereas, on the contrary, where there are the Holy Spirit and faith, there the world is overcome.

5. He that neglects prayer enters into a state of carnal security, and every kind of iniquity. Such a man is not sensible how deeply he is engaged in sin; but rushes into all the avenues of destruction which lie open to receive him. The good things of this world which God has given him, such as health and riches, he regards as things that come by chance, or are secured by his own labor; and upon that account he has no gratitude to his Creator and Benefactor.

6. As man, since his fall, is exposed to continual dangers, both of body and soul, so is he particularly in danger from the devil, evil spirits, and wicked men, who, like the devil, are continually plotting the destruction of the righteous. Whosoever, therefore, neglects prayer, will be, in the midst of these temptations, like a ship tost in a storm, without help or hopes of escape.

7. Such a one also leads a most unhappy life; he is in continual difficulties and fears, being perplexed, doubtful, and uneasy about the success of his affairs. His head and hands are full of business; yet he sees but little fruit of his labors, and even that little is in the end unblessed. Therefore, though the Scripture says that "the wicked may be seen in great power," yet it adds, "they pass away, and are not." Ps. 37 : 35, 36. They are "like the chaff which the wind driveth away." Ps. 1 : 4. On the other hand, they that seek unto God by prayer "shall flourish like a palm tree, and grow like a cedar in Lebanon." Ps. 92:12. And "though many are the afflictions of the righteous" (Ps. 34 : 19), yet the wicked undergo more pain and trouble to go to hell than the righteous do to obtain heaven.

A PRAYER.

Most merciful and compassionate Father, thou knowest that man renders himself miserable by his own negligence and sloth, whilst he transgresses thy commands, and neglects the duty of prayer, contemning and slighting thy most certain and faithful promises. But because thou lovest thy creatures, and art not willing that any should perish, therefore it is that thou dost so earnestly invite us to the exercise of prayer. Give me grace to lay this continually to heart, that I may be able to offer up my prayers aright, through thy Son Jesus Christ, and be delivered from the punishments and miseries due to the despisers of that holy duty. Amen.

SECTION III.

THE BENEFITS OF CONTINUAL PRAYER.

Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.—JOHN 16 : 24.

1. Man, since his fall, is become slothful and inactive in everything that is

good. He, therefore, that would escape this unhappy state, and the destruction that will certainly attend it, must stir himself up by prayer; and by holy meditation conquer his aversion to divine things, and devoutly consider with himself the advantages of prayer. Let him reflect, that he thereby praises, honors, and adores the eternal, living, and true God; that he does not worship any strange God; but offers up his most earnest supplications to the only one and true God, whose commands, like an obedient child, he ought to obey, and show forth the praises of his Creator, Father, and Saviour.

2. He that prays does not despise the promises of God, but testifies by his prayers that he sets a just value upon them, acknowledging that God is true, and that he neither can nor will lie.

3. Prayer is the life of faith, causing it to flourish and prosper like a tree by the river side, and faith is the root of all that is good in us. Faith is our power, our spiritual consolation, our strength against all our enemies and temptations, yea, faith is our "victory that overcometh the world" (1 John 5 : 4); and consequently everything else that opposes and hinders us in our spiritual warfare.

4. By prayer, we receive the Holy Spirit. Luke 11 : 13; Zech. 12 : 10. By prayer, we make room for the Holy Spirit to work and exert his power in us, and by this means to come and make his abode with us. John 14 : 23. By prayer, we obtain the true light and knowledge of God, so as perfectly to understand his will; and, by prayer, we abide in his kingdom, and are partakers of the blessings of heaven.

5. By prayer, we shake off carnal security, resist sin, and, by vanquishing flesh and blood, "fight the good fight, and hold faith and a good conscience." 1 Tim. 1 : 19; 6 : 12.

6. By prayer, we oppose temptations, dangers, afflictions, the devil, and wicked men. For prayer is a strong tower of defence against our enemies, and the holy fortress to which we must have recourse (Eph. 6 : 18; Prov. 18 : 10; Ps. 31 : 3); and though the devil and wicked men raise the greatest opposition, yet "all things work together for good to them that love God." Rom. 8 : 28.

7. Lastly, he that continually watches unto prayer may always thankfully rejoice in the Holy Ghost; according to the doctrine of St. Paul, "Rejoice evermore; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks." 1 Thess. 5 : 16–18. For the comfortable addresses made to God, the eternal King, by prayer, are an effectual remedy against sorrow, trouble, misery, and affliction; and produce joy, peace, and tranquillity in the hearts of the faithful; and when our prayers are right, we are assured that all our righteous designs shall prosper in our hands "whilst we cast our care upon God." 1 Pet. 5 : 7. "The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing." Phil. 4 : 5, 6. "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass." Ps. 37 : 5. For all solicitude arises from a distrust of God, which naturally proceeds from the neglect of prayer. On the contrary, faith and prayer give us confidence towards God, and are the proper antidote against all anxiety and trouble of mind.

A PRAYER.

Help me, O Lord my God, that I may continually call to mind, that it is for my own sake that thou invitest and urgest me to the exercise of prayer.

Do thou rouse me, and I shall arise; awaken thou me, and I shall awake, and follow Christ alone. Amen.

SECTION IV.

THE TRUE CHRISTIAN CHOOSES THE NARROW WAY IN CHRIST, RATHER THAN THE BROAD WAY IN ADAM.

We glory in tribulations.—ROM. 5 : 3.

1. The Scripture teaches us that when Adam was placed in Paradise, God showed him the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and forbade him to eat of it (Gen. 2 : 9, 17); so that Adam was thus placed between time and eternity. Life and death, light and darkness (Deut. 30 : 15), were set before him, that he might qualify himself for eternal glory in the narrow way. Our case is just the same. For since the fall of Adam, Christ comes to us, and endeavors to draw us from the broad way in Adam, to the narrow way, which is himself; and this he does gently and without violence, resolving to force no man either to his salvation or his condemnation. He shows us the way by his prevenient grace, which is bestowed on all men without exception. Christ now says, "Enter ye in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction; and many there be that go in thereat. Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." Matt. 7 : 13, 14.

2. Here we plainly see two paths set before us: the one is the way of the world, in which many walk, because they continue in Adam, and refuse Christ; the other is the way of God, in which few walk, because they prefer the broad way in Adam. Many are the difficulties which attend both these paths. If you conform yourself to the world, you will meet with many troubles and vexations; and, not being established in the truth of God, your lot finally is eternal damnation. But if you enter into the way of God through Christ, and persevere in prayer, you must expect to suffer with Christ, from the opposition of this evil world: but, at the same time, your heart shall be constantly filled with the refreshing consolations of the Spirit of truth, and in the end, you shall obtain everlasting life. 2 Tim. 2 : 11, 12; 3 : 12.

3. He that prays, fights against the devil and his own corrupt nature; overcomes himself, the devil, and all the enemies of his salvation; and shall at last with Christ, the Captain of his salvation (Heb. 2 : 10), enter into everlasting rest.

4. But he that lives in the neglect of prayer, makes no progress in the conquest of his spiritual enemies; but is a miserable slave of the world, and shall at last, with the prince of darkness, be condemned to everlasting misery.

5. It is better to fight now, and to enter triumphantly into everlasting glory, than not to fight, and yet endure many afflictions, and at last be doomed to everlasting destruction.

A PRAYER.

Oh that men would but consider these things! They would then loathe and despise this present world; would hate and deny themselves, and would follow Christ alone, in the narrow way of the cross. That we may, therefore, seriously lay these things to heart; that we may renounce the old Adam within us, and put on the new man, Christ Jesus: and at last, through the narrow way, enter into everlasting life, may God of his infinite mercy grant, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SECTION V.

CONSIDERATIONS WHICH SHOULD MOVE THE HEART TO COMMUNE WITH GOD IN PRAYER.

Am I a God at hand, saith the Lord, and not a God afar off?—Jer. 23 : 23.

1. It is of great use to us, to have before us certain heads which may serve as encouragements to the exercise of earnest prayer, which is that worship in spirit and in truth, which God requires of all his servants.

2. I. First, then, we must consider that "God knows what things we have need of, before we ask him." Matt. 6 : 8.

3. II. That God draws, invites, and encourages us to the exercise of prayer, and assuredly promises that he will hear our prayers. Ps. 50 : 15.

4. III. That God is no respecter of persons, but has an equal regard for all mankind. Acts 10 : 34.

5. IV. That he is as sinful who presumes to pray upon the opinion of his own righteousness, merit, and holiness, as he that is afraid to pray out of a sense of his own sins and unworthiness. Luke 18 : 11, 14.

6. V. That God is not confined to any certain place, where only we ought to worship him; but that he is everywhere to be found, and is always "nigh to them that call upon him." John 4 : 21, 22; Ps. 145 : 18.

7. VI. That God is, in his own eternity, unchangeable, and not confined to any certain time; but is always attentive to the prayers of his servants. 1 Thess. 5 : 17.

8. VII. That God anticipates our prayers, and gives us both natural and supernatural blessings, which yet, without prayer, nobody can truly enjoy.

9. These considerations will renew and awaken every soul that shall duly attend to them (Eph. 5 : 14): they will cleanse them from darkness and error; establish them on the foundation of truth; elevate them towards God; and inflame them with a lively devotion. For from them flow the following lessons:

10. I. That God commands and encourages us to pray, not for His own sake, as if He were ignorant of our wants, but for our sakes, that being quickened by prayer we might know and acknowledge them ourselves.

11. II. That God does not stand in need of any minute declarations of our necessities, but knows, even before we ask him, what things we have need of. Isa. 65 : 24; Ps. 139 : 2.

12. III. That God, who never slumbereth nor sleepeth, needs not to be awakened by our cries, fastings, and watchings; but that these exercises are profitable for man, to awaken and rouse him from the sleep of sin. Ps. 33 : 18; 34 : 15.

13. IV. That God is a thousand times more ready to give, than man is to receive. Jer. 32 : 41.

14. V. That the goodness and mercy of God towards mankind are infinite (Ps. 103 : 12), but that the negligence and sloth of men in praying, seeking, and knocking, are excessive. Matt. 7 : 7.

15. VI. That God is impartial and just in all his works, and is by no means the cause of our blindness, infirmities, ignorance, or miseries; but that wretched man himself is in fault, by neglecting to pray or to seek. Deut. 32 : 4; Ps. 92 : 15.

16. VII. That the true worshipper may at all times and in all places, offer up his prayers in spirit and in truth to God the Father, through Christ, provided he do not hinder himself. John 4 : 21, 23; Luke 18 : 1, etc.

17. VIII. That whosoever neglects prayer, deprives himself of the blessed opportunities of speaking to God. Ps. 19 : 14. Thus the sinner inflicts punishment on himself.

18. IX. That the diligent worshipper doeth good to himself; not of himself, but by the prevenient grace of God, which is freely given to all men without exception.

19. Let him that is unacquainted with the preceding heads of meditation, know that he is still far from Christ, and has tasted but little of the truth. He who knows them, and believes them not, is guilty of a very great sin; and, lastly, he that believes them and yet is inactive, and does not stir up himself to the practice of them, but, on the other hand, lives on from day to day, in a state of doubt and indifference, is a great sinner, and shall be beaten with many more stripes than he who knew not his Lord's will, and therefore did it not. Luke 12 : 47. Let the one last mentioned look carefully to himself, that he may be seriously converted, and not perish in his sins.

A PRAYER.

O Lord, and merciful Father, awaken me by thy Holy Spirit, that I may not only know these things, but may practise them by a lively faith, and become a true worshipper in spirit and in truth. Amen.

SECTION VI.

THE OMNISCIENT GOD KNOWS WHAT WE STAND IN NEED OF, BEFORE WE ASK HIM.

Thou understandest my thought afar off.—Ps. 139 : 2.

1. The truth of these words is confirmed by our blessed Saviour: "Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him" (Matt. 6 : 8); and by David: "He that planted the ear, shall he not hear?" (Ps. 94 : 9); and by St. Paul: "He is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Heb. 4 : 12. For our God is not as man, who stands in need of a long account of our necessities. All the possible successions of time are in his sight but as one single moment, in which all things, both past and to come, are beheld as actually present. Therefore, he numbered the hairs of our heads before we were born, and understands all our thoughts before we pray. In a word, all things are naked and open in his sight. Heb. 4 : 13. These and similar meditations may be of use, for the encouragement of those who begin the exercise of prayer; so that they may always have certain sentences of Scripture ready at hand, upon which they may meditate, and which they may apply to themselves, by comprising the sense of them in a short prayer. This will be easily understood by those that are exercised herein.

2. A man that walks abroad in an open spacious field, and in a clear day, finds himself encompassed with light; which light, if it were spiritual, instead of being natural, would even penetrate the spirit itself. Just so are all creatures, visible and invisible, in the sight of God. He discerns and comprehends all things, and nothing can be hidden from him. "The darkness hideth not from him; but the night shineth as the day." Ps. 139 : 12. He himself is the all-seeing eye, to whom all things are as clear as a mote in transparent crystal would be to our bodily eyes.

3. This consideration is of great use to the inexperienced, in order to purge their hearts from the thick clouds of darkness and error, and to quicken them in prayer; by which, when truly

roused and awakened, we discover many great and noble truths that had hitherto been hidden from our eyes. Many are apt to think, that God knows and sees no more than they themselves do; which is the effect of egregious blindness and ignorance, and will merit a proportionable punishment. Ps. 7 : 9.

A PRAYER.

Almighty and everlasting God and Father, the Searcher of hearts, and the Judge of all our secret thoughts, who seest, knowest, and hearest all our designs and purposes before they are brought to pass! Behold, I appear before thee, to confess my necessities, not with any design to awaken thee by my cries, as if thou wert ignorant of me, or of my concerns; but to stir up myself to know and consider, that thou knowest all my necessities, and that the very hairs of my head are numbered by thee. Assist me, Holy Father, that I may truly know and consider these things, that my soul may joyfully submit to thy good pleasure, and that I may wait upon thee in true resignation and obedience. Amen.

SECTION VII.

THAT GOD INVITES AND ENGAGES ALL MEN TO THE EXERCISE OF PRAYER, AND PROMISES TO HEAR THEIR PETITIONS.

Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered.—Joel 2 : 32.

1. These words ought to be carefully considered; for it is not sufficient to believe that God knows all things; we must also remember that God commands us to pray, and promises to hear us. Thus, "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you." John 16 : 23. "Every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened." Matt. 7 : 8. "Men ought always to pray, and not to faint." Luke 18 : 1. "If any one lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him." James 1 : 5. "If we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us." 1 John 5 : 14. "All things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." Matt. 21 : 22. In all these places, both a command and a promise are expressed; which must needs make an impression upon every man that has not a heart of stone; and he that does not believe them, is in a desperate state, and deserves not the name of a man. But if these things are true, and acknowledged to be so, why do we not believe them? Why do we not pray? Why are not our prayers heard? Why do we not receive the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit? Verily, because we do not pray *with faith*, nor wait upon God with *constancy and patience*. For the property of true faith is to submit ourselves to God, in a quiet and peaceful resignation of mind; but he that wavers, is unfaithful and inconstant, and makes his own prayers void. Moreover, he denies the truth and power of God, making him either unable or unwilling to supply our wants. Both these are signs of a perverse spirit.

2. On the other hand, faith gives quietness to the soul, and makes it capable of divine grace. God requires nothing from man but that he should be quiet, and rest from all his works, and especially from himself. The spirit and mind of man are like waters, upon which the Spirit of God is perpetually moving. Gen. 1 : 2. So soon as our spirit is quiet, and at rest from the impetuous motions of worldly

thoughts, then God rests upon it, and speaks forth the word of his power into such quiet and still waters; and the moment of this divine influx is of more value than the whole world. Still waters are easily warmed by the sun, but violent and rapid streams seldom or never. Unbelief sacrilegiously robs God of his honor, destroying the very names of faith and truth. This changes the Christian into a heathen and atheist, and, unless repented of, will lead to his everlasting destruction.

A PRAYER.

O Eternal, faithful, and righteous God, who canst not lie; I know that thou dost graciously invite, encourage, and impel all men, for their own infinite advantage, to pray unto thee; and dost offer thy grace and mercy equally to them all, without distinction or partiality. Grant, I beseech thee, Holy Father, that I may seriously lay these things to heart, and attain a true, firm, and upright faith, and not be deaf to the invitations of thy infinite mercy; but may constantly and cheerfully submit myself to thee, and expect with patience thy light within my soul. Amen.

SECTION VIII.

GOD IS NO RESPECTER OF PERSONS, BUT HAS AN IMPARTIAL LOVE FOR ALL HIS CREATURES.

The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works.—Ps. 145 : 9.

1. I am now indeed convinced (some one may say), that God knows my necessities better than I can discover them to him; that he has commanded prayer, and promised to hear it: but I am not yet fully satisfied, whether I in particular am not excluded from the benefit of these promises?—Come, then, and let us now show that God is no respecter of persons, in opposition to those blind guides, who, by their false interpretations of some places of Holy Scripture, particularly Rom. 9 : 13, Mal. 1 : 2, and the like, have endeavored to prove that God has an aversion to some particular persons, and a partial fondness for others; contrary to the plain and indisputable testimonies of Holy Scripture, which we ought firmly to fix in our minds, that we may not be perverted by the false glosses of unreasonable men.

"Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation, he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." Acts 10 : 34, 35.

"The Lord your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward. He doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and widow, and loveth the stranger, in giving him food and raiment." Deut. 10 : 17, 18.

"God accepteth no man's person." Gal. 2 : 6.

"There is no respect of persons with God." Col. 3 : 25.

"As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live.—As for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall thereby in the day that he turneth from his wickedness.—None of his sins that he hath committed shall be mentioned unto him." Ezek. 33 : 11, 12, 16.

"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. Howbeit, for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering, for a

pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting." 1 Tim. 1 : 15, 16.

"God will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." 1 Tim. 2 : 4.

"God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." 2 Pet. 3 : 9.

These and such testimonies of Scripture ought to be deeply imprinted on our minds, that every one may know, that all men are equally dear to God; that all men were created by him according to his image, and redeemed by Jesus Christ. Moreover, God has sworn by himself, that he desires not the death of a sinner. Hence God assists us all by his prevenient grace, not waiting till we are worthy to receive it. He comes to us, before we come to him; he knew us, before we knew him; he loveth us, before we love him; he loved us while we were yet his enemies. Rom. 5 : 10. He, therefore, is blind and impious, who dares assert that God does not love all men alike. Such a one scorns the God of heaven, accuses him of injustice, and makes him a respecter of persons.

2. But when it is said that God loved Jacob, and hated Esau (Rom. 9 : 13), such language is not to be understood of them personally, or as indicating only hatred, but refers to the exclusion from the inheritance in the land of promise—not to a hatred which refuses salvation, but to the refusal of temporal blessings. And though we are all sinners, yet God has a greater regard for those that love him than for those that continue in their sins and blindness, neither acknowledging God for their Father, nor bringing forth the fruits of repentance. God takes no pleasure in the wickedness of these men; but rather desires that all should be saved. And whereas it is said that "he hath mercy on whom he will have mercy; and whom he will he hardeneth" (Rom. 9 : 18); we must know that he hardeneth none but those who by their unbelief and impenitence have hardened themselves. These, indeed, he does at length, with reluctance, leave to themselves; and being thus forsaken, they naturally fall into a state of entire obduracy. And whereas it is said, that "it is not of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy" (Rom. 9 : 16); it is plain that God doth elect and anticipate us by his grace, and not we ourselves, and that he is the Author and Giver of all our graces; so that whatsoever good we do, is owing to him, and not to ourselves.

3. This is the true interpretation of those places, which some perverse minds have interpreted, as if God had decreed to damn a great part of mankind (as the poets feigned of Saturn, who hated and devoured his own children). This is a doctrine that tends directly to subvert our faith, and to precipitate men into despair, or into a rude, lawless and Epicurean mode of life, as appears by woful experience. From all which snares, and deceits of the devil, may the Lord deliver us! Amen.

A PRAYER.

O Eternal and most righteous God, who acceptest not the persons of men; but art so just in thy dispensations towards us all, as to anticipate us with thy grace and favor, not waiting till we are already worthy, but bestowing thy prevenient grace to make us so; teach me, by thy Holy Spirit, gratefully to acknowledge thy boundless mercy towards us. Let thy light arise

in my heart, that I may not, with the wicked world, disown that grace which thou hast already bestowed upon me, which is that treasure hidden in the field, the earnest of the inheritance of the saints; but may diligently search after it, find it, taste it, and enjoy it. Amen.

SECTION IX.

SHOWING THAT IT IS EQUALLY SINFUL TO PRAY TO GOD UPON THE PRESUMPTION OF OUR OWN MERIT, AND TO FORBEAR ON ACCOUNT OF OUR UNWORTHINESS.

Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.—LUKE 15 : 21.

1. He that prays upon the presumption of his own holiness and piety, walketh not in the direct and plain path of the children of God; but turns to the right hand, outruns his Saviour, and, like a sacrilegious robber, deprives him of the honor due unto him (since He alone is our righteousness, our holiness, and our sanctification, 1 Cor. 1 : 30), and depends entirely upon his own unprofitable works; not acknowledging the merit of Christ alone, but depending upon human righteousness, and believing that God hears our prayers, not for the sake of Jesus Christ, but for the sake of man's good works. But this is directly contrary to Scripture. "If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquity, O Lord, who shall stand?—But with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption." Ps. 130 : 3, 7. A man may as well say, that the operation of his eyes causes the light of the sun, as that his own righteousness is the cause of his receiving the grace of God. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Elias, &c., were all saved by grace; all joining in that petition, "Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord, &c." Ps. 143 : 2.

2. He, on the other hand, that neglects to pray from a sense of his manifold transgressions, judging himself upon that account unworthy to speak to God, turns to the left hand, and sinks in his own misery and unworthiness, affronting the Son of God, and (without repentance) running into despair; whilst he thinks that the passion and death of Christ are not sufficient to atone for the sins of the whole world. Against this temptation, let us call to mind, that "where sin abounded, there grace did much more abound." Rom. 5 : 20. For our misery appeals to the mercy of God, our weakness to his power, our unworthiness to his majesty, our unrighteousness to his righteousness.

"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." 1 Tim. 1 : 15.

"As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live." Ezek. 33 : 11.

"There is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." Rom. 8 : 1.

"As for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall thereby in the day that he turneth from his wickedness." Ezek. 18 : 21; 33 : 12.

"For this (the remission of sins) shall every one that is godly pray." Ps. 32 : 6.

"Be not righteous overmuch, neither make thyself over wise." Eccles. 7 : 16.

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1 : 9.

"Righteousness shall look down from heaven." Ps. 85 : 11.

3. If I resolve not to pray till I

know myself to be worthy, I shall certainly never do it at all. And if I should not desire God to bestow upon me his grace and favor, till by my own strength I became just and holy, I should never obtain anything. Alas, poor man, what canst thou bestow upon him who standeth not in need of thy gifts? Rom. 11 : 35. Or what canst thou obtain by the workings of thy corrupt nature, which, however specious in thine own eyes, are of no value in the sight of God? Rom. 3 : 24. Verily, nothing at all. Away, then, with all those who glory in their own righteousness, and pretend to justify themselves; yea, let all creatures keep silence before God. Thine own worthiness will here avail thee nothing, and thine unworthiness shall do thee no harm; for the Lord Jesus Christ, thy Saviour, is he that "forgiveth thy unrighteousness, and covereth all thy sin." Ps. 32 : 1. But rather conclude with thyself, that as a drop of water is swallowed up in the sea, so are all thy transgressions in the boundless and incomprehensible mercies of Jesus Christ.

A PRAYER.

O Merciful and compassionate Father! who teachest me in thy holy word how I ought, in thy Son Jesus Christ, to walk in the narrow way, turning neither to the right hand nor to the left; that I may neither fall through a vain presumption of my own piety, nor be cast into despair by the gloomy prospect of my guilt, and so die in my sins; grant that I may seriously consider that neither my good works can merit, nor my sins hinder, the grace of Christ, my Redeemer; that so I may continue firm and steadfast amidst all my temptations; that I may neither be misled by the evil spirit of presumption and spiritual pride that walketh at noonday, nor be afraid of the destroying angel of despair that walketh in darkness; but that, having conquered the weakness of my nature, I may continue steadfast in the faith, filled with spiritual joy and consolation. Let thy grace, blessed Lord Jesus, begin, carry on, and perfect this good work in me. Amen.

SECTION X.

THE TRUE WORSHIPPER OUGHT NOT TO SEEK AFTER GOD IN ANY PARTICULAR PLACE; FOR HE FINDS HIM EVERYWHERE IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH.

The hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. The true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth.—John 4 : 21, 23.

1. Where shall we find God? Jer. 23 : 23. Must we look for him in consecrated temples? Must we seek him in the ends of the earth? Must we search for him in the stars, or at Jerusalem, or upon the top of Mount Tabor? No! but "in spirit and in truth" (John 4 : 23) seek and find him. We are, indeed, sometimes forced to the fatigue of long journeys, in order to make our complaints, and beg the protection of the princes of this world; but God is everywhere; "He filleth heaven and earth" (Jer. 23 : 24), and is nearer to all creatures than they are to themselves. "He is above all, and through all, and in us all." Eph. 4 : 6. The utmost dimensions of space, and even the boundless extent of eternity, appear to him as but a single point. Ps. 139 : 7. As a man that walks at noonday, in an open field, is environed with light, whether he discern it or be blind, so are all creatures surrounded with the presence of God. These are the waters

upon which the Spirit of God moves, penetrating through all beings and all spirits, though ever so pure and glorious. God is always near to us, though many are not so to him, having no more perception of the communications of his presence than a blind man has of the light, which he sees not, though surrounded by it. God never turns away from us; but we, being turned away from him, fall into that degree of blindness, as to say, that God has withdrawn himself from us, and is become unkind to us; whereas, the change is only in ourselves, and in our own hearts, by which we are tempted to charge God foolishly. Thus the sinner, by turning away from God, becomes his own tormentor; whilst God continues unchangeably just and good in all his works (Ps. 145 : 8); however often man, being blinded and turned away from God, may represent him as an angry, unjust, and unmerciful being.

2. Hence, then, we may gather the genuine sense of those passages of Scripture, which say that "the kingdom of God is within us," and not without us (Luke 17 : 21), and that we have nothing to do with "them that are without." 1 Cor. 5 : 12. These, without all dispute, are not to be understood of any external place, but of the spirit or inward man, according to the faith. To confine the kingdom of God to any certain place, is antichristian, even as our blessed Lord has told us that men will say, "Lo, here is Christ, or lo, there." Matt. 24 : 23. But if any place could save or condemn a man, then Lucifer himself could never have become a devil in heaven; nor would Adam ever have sinned in paradise. So if any place would condemn a man, then should no man living be saved; since this whole world lieth in darkness, and all the inhabitants thereof are under the dominion of the devil, who is the prince of it. John 12 : 31. He therefore that has faith, though with Jonah he were in the depths of the sea, yet would be in the kingdom of God; and he that has it not, though he were in the church, heard sermons, and would join in acts of communion, yet in the sight of God he is *without*, and has no part in, or title to, the kingdom of God.

A PRAYER.

O Lord Jesus Christ, who art the only way, light, and gate of heaven, I praise thee from the bottom of my heart, that by this meditation, thou teachest me how I am in thee, and thou in me, in whatsoever place I am; how thou, my true and only High Priest, art with me, and deliverest me from my sins, whensoever I lift up my heart to thee. Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me. Teach me, O Lord, always to acknowledge this, and not after the manner of this ungrateful world, to undervalue or despise this hidden treasure; but that I may in true faith seek, find, taste, and enjoy it. Amen.

SECTION XI.

THE WORSHIPPER IS NOT RESTRICTED TO CERTAIN TIMES OF PRAYER, BUT MAY AT ANY HOUR ADDRESS GOD IN PRAYER, PROVIDED THAT HE DOES NOT HINDER HIMSELF.

In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee.—*Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near.*—ISA. 49 : 8; 55 : 6. *Behold, now is the accepted time, behold, now is the day of salvation.*—2 COR. 6 : 2.

1. From what has been already said concerning *the place*, and what we are now observing further upon that head,

it is plain, that he is truly happy who is in the kingdom of God. The reason of this is, because he has the treasure within him, wheresoever he is; and that he, who, through unbelief, is not in the kingdom of God, is truly a stranger and foreigner, however he may with other Christians, hear sermons and receive the Sacrament. The *place* will neither save us nor condemn us; that can be done by nothing but *faith* or *unbelief* existing in the heart and spirit of man. The true Christian, in whatever place he lives, as he has the Spirit of Christ within him, so he has, by consequence, a principle of grace, pardon, and remission of sins; for Christ is in him. I speak not this to discourage the external exercise of preaching; but for the comfort of all sincere souls under necessities, sickness, or in strange lands; when they are assured that they are truly in Christ, that Christ is in them, and that they are not "without" but "within." This should also alarm the sinner, who, though living among Christians, yet, in the sight of God is excluded. For every unbeliever cuts himself off from the body of Christ, and from the most valuable privileges of his communion; so that a wicked man, under the agonies of sickness, would receive no benefit by having the Holy Sacrament, though the priest, or even the pope himself stood by him; or by being brought and laid in the midst of the church. But if a man has within him a true and living faith, it could do him no harm, though he should die in a heathen country, or on the sea, without the comfort of the Holy Sacrament, or a priest; because Jesus Christ, the true High Priest, is in him, and even the kingdom of God, as our blessed Lord abundantly testifies John 4: 21; Luke 17: 21; Matt. 24: 23. How blind then and miserable are those men who seek for blessedness from man, confining it to a certain place, and look to external things. This, however, is the case with many thousands who thus lose the internal treasure. Externals are but means, which though not to be despised, yet are not to be valued as the end itself, to which they are intended to lead. Christ is the great treasure of man, who can bestow himself without the use of means, where they cannot be had. We come together in the church, that with one accord we may exhort and admonish one another in the divine Presence, call upon God to avert public evils and calamities, and exercise one another in divine matters, that so we, who are otherwise totally blind in spiritual things, being excited by these means, may at length understand and see that God is not contained "in the heaven of heavens" (1 Kings 8: 27), nor confined to any place; being, as Job witnesseth, "high as heaven, deeper than hell, longer than the earth, and broader than the sea." Job 11: 8, 9.

2. What we have observed of place, may be also applied to *time*, to which the eternal and unchangeable God is by no means confined, so as not to be always at liberty to hear our prayers. Great men and princes of this world are not always to be spoken with, and frequently refuse admittance to their petitioners; being engaged either by the necessities or diversions of life. But our God cannot be thus separated from his creatures; at one view, He sees, and hears, and considers all things that are done upon the earth, and "understandeth our thoughts afar off." Ps. 139: 2. He numbereth "the very hairs of our heads" (Matt. 10: 30); and "a thousand years in his sight

are but as one day." Ps. 90 : 4 ; 2 Pet. 3 : 8. God is not capable of alteration or change ; is confined to no time, limited by no place, always ready to hear and to help us ; yea, he is continually "standing at the door, and knocking, that we may open to him." Rev. 3 : 20. So that he is always ready, but we are not. Whereas if we would constantly and without ceasing wait for Him, we should never fail to receive a ready answer to all our prayers.

3. But alas! the concerns of this lower world have so great an influence upon our minds, distracting our thoughts, and withholding us from devout retirement, that we must endeavor to purify our minds from all thoughts of the creature, according to a devout writer, who advises us, "to lay aside all thoughts of this or that thing, time or place, and bring all the powers of our souls into profound repose." And in this sabbath or rest of the soul, in this quiet cessation from the cares and labors of corrupt nature, when we pray, God descends with his living word, and the soul of man perceives and tastes the truth and love of God ; of which, before this patient preparation, it was wholly ignorant and insensible. So that the soul cannot forbear crying out in the words : "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth!" (Exod. 34 : 6.) "Now, I find thy prevenient grace helping my infirmities, and assisting me to pray as I ought." Then thou wilt be amazed at the blindness of thy own heart, which gave thee so imperfect a notion of God, as to believe that God was to be persuaded with external ceremonies, and clamorous prayers, and that he stood in need of a long relation of thy wants and necessities ; whereas He sees to the very bottom of thy soul, and "understandeth all thy thoughts afar off."

A PRAYER.

Almighty, eternal, and most merciful God and Father! Thy goodness and truth are higher than the heavens, deeper than the sea, wider than the earth ; all places are to Thee the same, and in thy sight all times are alike. Thou art above all places and all times, and yet dost penetrate and fill all things. Thou art nearer to me than I am to myself ; thou anticipatest me with thy grace, and embracest me with thy mercy, which, through my blindness and misery, I could neither know nor hope for. Grant, that by thy Holy Spirit, I may seriously lay these things to heart, and for the future, look up to thee as my merciful Father, who knowest all things, and art present at all times, and in all places, that I may no more presume to judge of Thee by any natural blindness, and no more persuade myself that Thou art to be awakened, or prevailed upon by my crying ; that thou needest any long discourses of mine, or requirest any certain time for prayer. But give me grace to consider, that the true worshipper may have access to Thee at all times, and in all places, and that thy goodness is always and everywhere present with us ; but that no man can enjoy it, or taste of thy sweetness, unless he be first awakened and encouraged by Thee to engage in devout prayer. That I may worthily and effectually perform this, give me thy Holy Spirit, who may work in me to will and to do according to thy good pleasure. Amen.

SECTION XII.

THE CONSIDERATIONS STATED ABOVE, NOT ONLY DISPOSE THE HEART TO TRUE PRAYER, BUT ALSO FURNISH VARIOUS USEFUL LESSONS.

It shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.—Isa. 65 : 24.

1. The *first* lesson which we learn is, that God has not commanded us to pray for his own sake, for he knoweth all things; but that we, being excited by these means, may be led to understand that he does know all things. God has so tender a concern for us, that he seems not to know anything, till we reflect within ourselves, that he does indeed know it. Hence it comes to pass, that when men do not diligently pray, they seem to think that God does not know. And, on the contrary, when we exercise ourselves in prayer, we soon learn that God knoweth all our necessities, and hath numbered the very hairs of our heads before we were born. These are thoughts that cannot enter into the hearts of those who despise the duty of prayer.

2. *Secondly.* We need not apply to God, as we do to one another, with a long account of our wants: all that we have to do is, daily to exercise ourselves in prayer, so that the inner man may enter into the kingdom of God.

3. *Thirdly.* God is (as Dr. Tauler says) a thousand times more ready to give, than we are to receive, through prayer and hope.

4. *Fourthly.* God stands in no need of any external ceremonies of ours, our watchings, fastings, or cryings, to awaken him, who "neither slumbereth nor sleepeth." Ps. 121 : 4. He not only foreknows our desires and prayers, but even our existence (Jer. 1 : 5); yet, on the other hand, the dulness and stupidity of men may by these exercises be excited, encouraged, and instructed to consider and understand the tender mercies of God towards all mankind.

5. *Fifthly.* Hence we discover the goodness, truth, and loving-kindness of God towards all men; and, on the other hand, the blindness and unbelief, the stupidity and unspeakable dulness of mankind towards God, who have so great a contempt of the mercies of God, and are so backward in their prayers and endeavors to obtain his grace.

6. *Sixthly.* God is righteous in all his works; and so far from his being the author of our miseries, blindness, and ignorance, we are indeed the cause of it ourselves; whilst, in contempt of his commands, we neglect to implore his mercies, and beg the blessings which he has promised to bestow on all that ask him. This is sufficient to vindicate the justice and impartiality of God in all his dealings towards us, and to lay the blame of all our sins and punishments upon ourselves, who are indeed the authors of both.

7. *Seventhly.* God is not confined to any certain time and place, but desires to be worshipped at *all times*, and in *all places*, in spirit and in truth.

8. These observations will rectify many mistakes, and open a man's eyes to discover things, of which he would otherwise have been ignorant. But though it is a shameful thing for a Christian to be ignorant of these matters, yet it is much more so to know, and not to reduce them to practice.

A PRAYER.

Awaken us, O God, that we may watch; draw us to Thee, and we will run in the true way, which conducts to the kingdom of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

CHAPTER XXXV.

PRAYER IS THE SIGN OF A TRUE CHRISTIAN, THAT IS, OF ONE WHO IS ANOINTED OF THE LORD.

Bow down thine ear, O Lord, hear me: for I am poor and needy.—Ps. 86 : 1.

THESE words give us an admirable account of the grounds and reasons of prayer; that it is quickened by affliction and a sense of misery, and is a mark of a true Christian.

2. I. For, first, every Christian is anointed and baptized with the Holy Spirit (1 John 2 : 20), who, when he is not resisted nor grieved, but obeyed, is continually groaning (Rom. 8 : 26) in the heart of man, raising and exalting the devout soul from earth to heaven. For as spirituous liquor extracts the strength and virtue of the herbs and flowers on which it is poured; so man, who is the flower of God, planted by the Lord himself, "a plant in the house of God" (Isa. 61 : 3; Ps. 92 : 13), must receive the preparation of the Holy Spirit, that his odor and sweet smell may therewith ascend up to God. Whosoever will faithfully attend to the workings of the Holy Spirit, and not resist his operations, will soon be convinced of the truth of these observations; he will perceive a devout sigh springing up from his heart, and breaking forth into these or the like words: "Great God, Holy Father, have mercy upon me!" As myrrh, frankincense, or other sweet perfumes, by being thrown upon burning coals, send forth a smoke and delicious fragrance, which they would not do without the help of fire; so whenever the fire of the Holy Spirit touches our hearts, and He is not hindered, there immediately arises a most fragrant perfume of sighs and prayers. And these are "golden vials full of odors, which are the prayers of saints." Rev. 5 : 8. Whence it appears, that devout sighs and prayers are the truest sign or indication of the Holy Spirit in the heart of man.

3. II. The soul of man is also called the temple or habitation of the Holy Ghost; and what is more likely to be heard there, than the prayers of its divine Inhabitant, who is emphatically called, "The Spirit of grace and of supplication"? Zech. 12 : 10. Hence prayer, when it proceeds from the very bottom of the heart, is a certain sign of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. I do not here refer to the prayers of hypocrites, of whom God speaketh by the mouth of his prophet, saying: "This people draw near me with their mouth, but have removed their heart far from me" (Isa. 29 : 13); but the true prayer, which is of the operation of the Holy Spirit, arises from the depth of the soul; and is like plentiful springs of water, for which the more deeply you dig, the higher you may raise them. Christ is the pure and beautiful fountain of salvation. Let every one, therefore, that thirsteth, come and drink. Isa. 55 : 1. His spring is very deep, namely, his eternal Divinity. "He that believeth on him, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water" (John 7 : 38); that is, prayers and the gifts of the Holy Ghost.

4. III. This is confirmed by the office of the Holy Spirit, which is, "to teach and to comfort" (John 16 : 7–13), neither of which he can do, unless He speaks; and that He cannot do, unless He have a church and a temple to speak in. This temple is the heart of man; and his language consists of the devout aspirations of the souls in which He operates; he has a secret and heavenly voice, which our heart hears, for he beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God,—whereby we cry, Abba, Father. Rom. 8 : 15, 16. Man cannot receive comfort, unless his heart, by being broken and contrite, be made capable of consolation. Ps. 51 : 17. This is a very significant figure taken from human bodies. For when the arm, or any other part, is broken, or bruised by some accident, what pleasure the broken and bruised part feels when soothed with some healing ointment! How does it assuage the throbbing pains of the limb, and, as it were, lull it into soft repose! So when the heart is wounded with affliction and sorrow, is broken and bruised with a lively sense of its misery, then the Holy Spirit shows himself truly a Comforter, shedding forth the oil of heavenly consolation into our afflicted breasts. For "he healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds." Ps. 147 : 3. "Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved: for thou art my praise." Jer. 17 : 14.

5. IV. Hence then we may learn the advantage of afflictions, and the benefit of the cross. Our blessed Lord has told us, "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick." Matt. 9 : 12. Come, therefore, thou divine Physician of souls; for we all have need of thee! "Bow down thine ear, O Lord, hear me: for I am poor and needy" (Ps. 86 : 1), —poor in righteousness and true holiness. So great is the poverty of man, that unless he be covered with the mercy of God, and clothed with the righteousness of Jesus Christ (Isa. 61 : 10), he must appear with shame and nakedness before the judgment of God and all his holy angels; and in this respect, man is by nature reduced so very low, that there is not a more indigent creature in the world. We may here apply that which was spoken to the church of Laodicea, "Thou knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." Rev. 3 : 17.

6. Moreover, the misery of which the Psalmist complains, is the effect of poverty. He that is poor, may easily be conceived to be miserable. He certainly is so, who is forsaken by all, has none to help him, wanders about, having neither house nor home, nor a place where to lay his head. And now, what state can we conceive to be more wretched, than that of a man by nature? He has no place where to rest himself, and knows not whither to fly for refuge! "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." 1 Cor. 15 : 19. Let us then acknowledge our poverty and spiritual misery in this life; we shall then receive the instructions and consolations of the Holy Spirit. He will teach us in our poverty, to sigh earnestly after the riches of divine grace and mercy; and in our spiritual misery and banishment, to lift up our eyes to God that dwelleth in the heavens. For our blessed Lord has assured us, that "in his Father's house are many mansions" (John 14 : 2); and the Psalmist, that "when our fathers and

mothers forsake us, the Lord will take us up." Ps. 27 : 10. Come then, ye that are in want and banishment, think upon your heavenly country. Ye that are poor, naked, and destitute, remember that the righteousness of Christ is your clothing, and the garment of salvation (Isa. 61 : 10); therefore, take ye care to preserve this clothing, "lest ye walk naked, and men see your shame." Rev. 16 : 15.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

ON THE BENEFITS AND POWER OF PRAYER, AND ON ITS TRUE GROUND OR FOUNDATION.

Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.—HEB. 4 : 16.

"HEAR my voice according to thy lovingkindness, O Lord" (Ps. 119 : 149), saith David; pointing out thereby the foundation of our prayer, namely, the grace of God; and this is conveyed to us through our Lord Jesus Christ, who is "full of grace and truth," and of whose fulness we ought all to receive. John 1 : 14, 16. For this reason he is also called the *Throne of Grace* (Heb. 4 : 16; Rom. 3 : 25), upon which the eye of faith in prayer ought continually to be fixed, according to the example of the children of Israel, who always offered up their prayers with their faces towards the mercy-seat. For in his name, and for his sake alone it is, that God has promised to hear our prayers (John 16 : 23); and thus even the holy prophets of old prayed: "O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, for the Lord's sake." Dan. 9 : 17.

2. I. *First*, the benefit of our prayers is well expressed by holy David in the latter part of the above-mentioned verse (Ps. 119 : 149): "Quicken me according to thy judgments." For life proceeds from the grace of God. But what is our life without divine grace? Therefore says the holy Psalmist, "Thy lovingkindness is better than life." Ps. 63 : 4. This quickening virtue is also derived to us through Christ Jesus. It was for this purpose that he took our flesh and blood, that by the quickening virtue of his body, we also might be quickened. And this we receive only by the means of prayer, which draws down a quickening power into our souls, to heal all our spiritual infirmities; like that which flowed from His body whilst on earth, to cure and heal the diseases and distempers of all those that touched him. Luke 6 : 19. Thus when we are afflicted and sorrowful, and can lay hold on Jesus Christ by the prayer of faith, we immediately find, as it were, new life and vigor flowing into our souls from that inexhaustible fountain of divine grace. This may be attested by the experience of many languishing and afflicted souls.

3. Whence we may learn: 1. That an afflicted soul cannot be refreshed

or comforted without prayer; as appears from the example of Christ, in the history of his passion (Matt. 26: 39), who has himself also for that reason given us a form of prayer. Matt. 6:9, etc. And we have, indeed, great reason to be thankful to God, who has given us prayer to be as an universal remedy to all afflicted souls. 2. Where the prophet says, "Hear me according to thy lovingkindness" (Ps. 119 : 149), he shows us that prayer is the proper means of obtaining mercy and the graces of the Holy Spirit, such as the increase of faith, charity, patience, the knowledge of God, devotion, inward peace and joy. These are such gifts, such graces, such heavenly treasures, as are better than heaven and earth. Moreover, hence we obtain strength and victory against the world, the devil, and all our enemies; which spiritual strength consists only in prayer. That was the power by which David and all the saints conquered their enemies, as appears by the example of Moses, Elias, Jehoshaphat, and others, who always prevailed by faith and prayer. 3. Every man has need of prayer in respect to his office, condition, and employment, in which no man can act either prudently or successfully without prayer. We are, indeed, in this miserable world, like people sailing amidst rocks and quicksands, and exposed to innumerable dangers; for which reason we ought the more fervently to implore the guidance and protection of the Holy Spirit.

4. II. Therefore, holy David adds, "They draw nigh that follow after mischief; they are far from thy law." Ps. 119 : 150. And this is a proper season for prayer. For what the devil cannot do himself, he leaves to be accomplished by wicked men, who are as so many executioners of his malice, and who make it their continual employment to disturb and injure good men. From these no man is secure; but here the most effectual help is prayer. Thus, "I will call upon the Lord who is worthy to be praised; so shall I be saved from mine enemies." Ps. 18 : 2. "Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul. O my God, I trust in thee; let me not be ashamed; let not mine enemies triumph over me. Yea, let none that wait on thee be ashamed; but let them be ashamed which transgress without cause." Ps. 25 : 1–3.

5. But it ought to be carefully noticed that David says, his enemies are far from the law of God. These are all they that persecute others, forsaking the word of God, and being far from his fear; whence it follows, that as they are far from God, so God is far from them, and nothing but destruction hangs over their heads. On the other hand, the faithful, pious, and devout soul approaches God through prayer.

6. When, therefore, we are daily lifting up our hearts to God, and learn to converse with him, we approach continually nearer and nearer to him, and by degrees, forgetting this lower world, from earthly we become heavenly and spiritual; like Moses, whose face, when he had conversed forty days and forty nights with God, shone like the sun. Exod. 34 : 29. For as we easily learn the customs and manners of those with whom we converse, and are not so well pleased with any company as that to which we are accustomed, so by continual and daily prayer, we grow daily more and more acquainted with the manners and language of our heavenly country, and are more and more inflamed with di-

vine love. Moreover, prayer is a preservative against sins, temptations, and all kinds of evils; according to that saying of Christ: "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." Matt. 26: 41. But if even then anything befall us, we know that it is by the immediate permission of God; and from it with all due submission and resignation to his will, we may lawfully pray to be delivered.

7. III. David proceeds: "Thou art near, O Lord: and all thy commandments are truth." Ps. 119: 151. Here he assures us, that the second and the third foundation of prayer, are the presence and the truth of God.

8. How great soever our calamities may be, there is no one consideration that gives us so much ease and comfort, as that of the presence of God with us: according to that Scripture: "Fear thou not, for I am with thee: be not dismayed, for I am thy God." Isa. 41: 10. In consideration of his presence, we may with assurance call upon him in all places, and upon all occasions. For though our Saviour tells us, "Thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly" (Matt. 6: 6): yet we are to consider, that these words were spoken against the hypocrites of those times, who, from a vain ostentation, used to pray standing in the synagogues, and in the corners of the street; but they are by no means binding on any man to pray in any one particular place.

9. We read of the patriarch Isaac (Gen. 24: 63), that he went out at the eventide into the field to meditate. And it is plain (Luke 6: 12), that our blessed Lord went alone "into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God." We may, therefore, in all places, and at any time, pray to God; but more especially when we are alone, and not disturbed by the conversation of others. Let us continually stir ourselves up to this divine conversation with God, remembering the words of the Psalmist, "Thou art near, O Lord." Now if this be true, as it most certainly is, we cannot do better than to be often conversing with him; according to that Scripture, "Call ye upon him while he is near." Isa. 55: 6. "The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him." Ps. 145: 18.

10. IV. So, too, the veracity of God is a strong obligation upon us to pray, because we know, 1. That he has commanded it; "Call upon me." Ps. 50: 15. 2. That he has promised to hear us; "Before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear." Isa. 65: 24. 3. That he has not only promised to hear, but has actually heard the prayers of the faithful. This is plain, from the examples of Moses, David, Samuel, Joshua, and of Cornelius in the Acts, whose "prayers and alms ascended up for a memorial before God." Acts 10: 4.

11. Many other examples are to be found in the Holy Scriptures. And that thou mayest not think that, because thou art not such a one as Moses, David, Elias, or Joshua, therefore thou shalt not be heard as easily as they were, thou art to consider that they all were men "subject to like passions as we are." James 5: 17.

12. Who was Cornelius? Acts, ch. 10. He was a heathen. Who was Manasseh? 2 Chron. 33: 12, 13. A most grievous sinner. Yet God has promised that he will hear the miser-

able. Ps. 34 : 7. "This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him." And "He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer." Ps. 102 : 17. "The expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever." Ps. 9 : 18. The cases just mentioned illustrate these promises.

13. V. But as the Psalmist adds: "Concerning thy testimonies, I have known of old, that thou hast founded them for ever" (Ps. 119 : 152), this consideration exceedingly encourages our prayers and strengthens our faith, and is another immovable foundation of prayer. The word and promise of God are built upon an eternal foundation, being nothing else but God himself and his Son Jesus Christ; in him the Word of God, and the salvation of man were founded "before the foundation of the world." Eph. 1 : 4. Whatsoever is built upon an eternal basis, no temporal thing can overturn. It is this that St. Paul had in his eye when he tells us that neither height, nor depth, nor things present, nor things to come, nor angels, nor principalities shall be able to separate us from the love of God. Rom. 8 : 38.

14. And what greater consolation can we wish? Or who can refrain from rejoicing, when he considers that our faith and prayer are founded upon that which is eternal? Hence it is said, "Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste" (Isa. 28 : 16); or, as St. Peter explains it, "shall not be confounded" (1 Peter 2 : 6): and St. Paul, "Other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 3 : 11); and again, "The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his." 2 Tim. 2 : 19.

15. Against this foundation even the gates of hell shall not prevail. Matt. 16 : 18. This, in short, is the foundation of our salvation, our faith and blessedness, which is more secure than heaven and earth.

16. For prayer is a conversation with God—a key of heaven—a free access to God—a familiarity with God—an opener of his mysteries—a spiritual banquet—a heavenly enjoyment—a nurse of virtues—a conqueror of vices—a medicine of the soul—a remedy against infirmities—an antidote against sin—a pillar of the world—a seed of blessing—an increase of faith—a support of hope—a parent of charity—a path of righteousness—a preserver of constancy—an ornament of holiness—a fire of devotion—a light of knowledge—a repository of wisdom—the strength of the soul—a remedy against faint-heartedness—a foundation of peace—the joy of the heart—a jubilee of the soul— a faithful companion in this earthly pilgrimage—the shield of a Christian soldier—a rule of humility—a forerunner of honor—a nurse of patience—a guardian of obedience—a fountain of quietness—the conquest of devils—a comfort of the sorrowful—a triumph of the just—the joy of the saints—a helper of the oppressed—the ease of the afflicted—the rest of the weary—an ornament of the conscience—an advancement of graces—an acceptable sacrifice—an encourager of mutual goodwill—the refreshment of this miserable life—the sweetening of death—a foretaste of the heavenly life—the earnest desire of everlasting salvation.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

REASONS WHY GOD CERTAINLY HEARS OUR PRAYERS.

Thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee. Give ear, O Lord, unto my prayer; and attend to the voice of my supplications. In the day of my trouble I will call upon thee; for thou wilt answer me.—Ps. 86 : 5–7.

THUS saith the prophet Jeremiah, "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning; great is thy faithfulness. The Lord is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him." Lam. 3 : 22–24.

2. In these words the Holy Spirit gives us strong consolation in our afflictions, drawn from the goodness and lovingkindness of God; without which we should immediately be consumed. As in the natural world light and darkness, by the appointment of God, alternately succeed each other, so do light and darkness, joy and sorrow, in the spiritual world. Hence there is a necessity that the light should spring up after darkness, and joy after sorrow, in the souls of the righteous. Ps. 97 : 11. For both our life and our well-being depend entirely upon the loving-kindness of God: "For in him we live, and move, and have our being." Acts 17 : 28. He is the never-failing fountain and spring of life and happiness. His works testify this, for by the effects we judge of the cause. Since, therefore, God is the Maker and Creator of all things that have life, it follows that He is LIFE itself; and as He is the original of all that is good, it follows, that He himself is the Supreme GOOD and LOVE itself. For this reason He is called the Living God, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16 : 16); not only from his essence, as being an original, necessary Being, but also from the effects which he produces; because he giveth and preserveth breath, and life, and motion to all things. Acts 17 : 25; Ps. 104 : 27. "Thou (O Belshazzar), hast praised the gods of silver and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know: and the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified." Dan. 5 : 23. "They have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water." Jer. 2 : 13. "The Lord is thy life, and the length of thy days." Deut. 30 : 20. "The Lord is the strength of my life." Ps. 27 : 1. Whence it follows, that God is in effect the life of every living creature, and produces and preserves life in all, according to the words of St. Paul, "Of him, and through him, and to him are all things: to whom be glory for ever." Amen. Rom. 11 : 36. "Christ is all in all." Col. 3 : 11.

3. Now though all creatures derive their life from God, yet man has received it from his Maker in a more eminent degree; for as he is endowed with a rational soul, it follows that he enjoys a more noble life than the rest of the creatures. The life of angels again is more noble and glorious than

that of men, because the glory and majesty of God manifest themselves more illustriously in them. Hence also, angels are described in 2 Thess. 1:7, as "mighty," because they are not subject to vanity and change like man. But the most noble life is that of Jesus Christ our Lord, because he is *God* and *Life* itself; according to St. John, "This is the true God, and eternal life" (1 John 5:20); that is, He is God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God. (Nicene Creed.)

4. And as God is the fountain and principle of life, so he is also of all good. For he is the supreme and eternal Good, and whatsoever bears the marks and characters of good, is derived from this original. Thus, every creature has received a small portion of the divine goodness, by which it bears witness of its Maker, and in some manner calls upon man to do the same. Thus the vine speaks to us, "Consider, O man, that the sweetness of my juice, with which I cheer thy heart (Ps. 104:15), is the gift of my Maker." And so the bread: "That virtue, O man, by which I satisfy thy hunger, is bestowed on me by my Creator and thine." This is the meaning of that saying of St. Augustine: "That God has, as it were, shed some drops of his divine goodness upon all the creatures, that they might thereby contribute to the happiness of man." And the Psalmist says: "Thou crownest the year with thy goodness; and thy paths drop fatness." Ps. 65:11.

5. That which, in nature, we call the *goodness* of God, is, by the Scriptures, called the *grace* of God; this bearing relation to the soul, and that to the body. And as God has, by a thousand ways, discovered his goodness in the great Book of nature, so he has, in innumerable instances, discovered his grace and mercy in the Book of his word, all which are completed in Christ, who is the great centre of all the treasures of divine goodness and love that are distributed in heaven and earth.

6. Now, as it is the nature of every good being to be communicative, and otherwise it ceases to be good (for who can tell what is good, unless it thus discover itself?); so no man could know whether God were good and gracious unless he had communicated his grace and goodness to others. Who could have known the inestimable benefits of Christ as a Saviour, if he had not so abundantly manifested his love towards us?

7. But why was God pleased to manifest his goodness, grace, and mercy to mankind? It was for this reason: that we might believe in him, love him above all things, and call upon him in all our troubles; and he was pleased to make this manifestation of himself, that it might be, as it were, the first incentive to kindle the flames of devotion in our hearts. For how should we call on him of whom we have not heard? Rom. 10:14. As Almighty God discovered himself to Moses, when he passed by, and he, upon the sense of his goodness, grace, and mercy, immediately began to pray (Exod. 34:8, 9), so has He, in like manner, manifested himself to us, and made all his goodness pass before us, that we also might learn to praise him.

8. But you will say, How has God manifested himself to me? If he would show himself to me, as he did to Moses, why should I not praise him as he did? To which I answer: This is done in Christ Jesus, in whom he manifested all his goodness after a

visible manner. "We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." John 1:14. And did we but seriously consider all that our blessed Saviour has done for us, we should, doubtless, exclaim: "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and in truth."

10. And thus we see in what sense the type, which may be discerned in this narrative of Moses, was fulfilled by the incarnation of Christ. For God, descending from heaven in him, was pleased to make his glory pass before us.

11. When Paul and Barnabas wrought great miracles at Athens, the heathens cried out, "The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men." Acts 14:11. This was their judgment of the matter; but we may in a very proper sense say, that all the goodness and grace of God did, by Christ, come down to us upon earth, in order that we might thereby be drawn to God, and that the spirit of faith and prayer might be bestowed on us. For by prayer only we obtain the grace and favor of God.

12. Let us now produce some reasons which may convince us, that God hears our prayers.

13. And *first*, such is the power of prayer and entreaty, that they often pacify and prevail upon, not only the compassionate and kind, but even morose and harsh tempers; of which we have an instance in the case of the widow, who by her continual prayers, prevailed even upon that unjust judge, who neither feared God, nor regarded man. Luke 18:4, 5. For prayer, as it proceeds from the spirit, and is, as it were, the strength of the soul, has a marvellous power and influence upon the minds of others, so as to be able to soften and mould them into any form of benevolence. Now as God is not a harsh Being, but merciful in the highest degree, the most sincere love, the most perfect patience, the most generous compassion, the most ardent love itself, and in a word, the most absolute perfection; so he cannot but be tenderly moved by the ardent and devout prayers of his servants. Were it otherwise, it would follow, that God is not supremely good, loving, and merciful. Now, as true as it is that he is all this; so true it is that he is easy to be entreated by devout and humble prayer.

14. Tauler says: "God is moved with so vehement a love towards us, as if his divinity itself depended on us, and his only aim and design were, to discover to us the abyss of his divinity, and the fulness of his essence and nature; so that all may belong to us, even as it belongs to him." And again, "We were created, and are called and invited to things immeasurably great, and eternal; wherefore God is exceedingly displeased with us, when we prefer the empty and trifling vanities of the world before him, who is ready, not only to bestow all things else, but even Himself upon us." Again, "So great is the love of God towards us, that he will deny us nothing: yea, he anticipates our prayers, meets us (as it were) half-way, and courts our friendship, being a thousand times more ready to give, than we are to receive."

15. The *second* argument is found in the *truth and promise of God.* "Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee." Ps. 50:15. "Thou, Lord, art good and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee." Ps. 86:5. The Lord,

we see, is *good;* and if this be not sufficient, he is also *ready to forgive;* and if this do not satisfy us, he is also *plenteous in mercy.* But to whom? Even *to all those that call upon him.* Hence, it is said, "The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth. He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him; he also will hear their cry, and will save them." Ps. 145 : 18, 19; Isa. 65 : 24; John 16 : 23; Matt. 7 : 7, 8. *Ask,* but rest not there; *seek* also; neither think this sufficient, but *knock.* "For every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened." "What things soever ye desire, when you pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." Mark 11 : 24. Compare this with Luke 11 : 9. And that God will keep his promise, is as certain, as that he really is what he, in his holy word, has declared himself to be. And that he may hear us, and pour his abundant goodness upon us, he has commanded us to pray often, to pray earnestly, and without ceasing. Luke 18 : 1; 1 Thess. 5 : 17.

16. A *third* argument for our prayer, is God's paternal tenderness, which is thus illustrated. "If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone?—If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" Luke 11 : 11, 13. And is not God this Father, "of whom the whole family in heaven and in earth is named"? (Eph. 3 : 15) whom St. Paul calls, "The Father of mercies, and God of all comfort?" 2 Cor. 1 : 3. Shall man then be merciful, and shall God, that created that merciful heart, be unmerciful? Shall he that gave to parents such tender affection, be without compassion himself? Why should God call himself a Father, if he be not of a paternal disposition? So that, in short, we must conclude, either that God is unjustly styled our Father, or else he will hear the prayers of his children that call upon him. Hence, it is said, "Thou, O Lord, art our Father." Isa. 63 : 16. And, "I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn." Jer. 31 : 9. But if the affections of a mother be so great, that she cannot but have "compassion on the son of her womb" (Isa. 49 : 15), why should we think God so void of mercy? Why should we question God's compassions toward us, if we approach him with penitent and contrite hearts? How do the mother's bowels yearn over her beloved son, when she sees him laboring under any dangerous disease? So the Almighty God says of himself: "Therefore, my bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord." Jer. 31 : 20.

17. A *fourth* argument is, *the intercession of Christ.* With what ardent prayer did he, in the time of his humiliation upon earth, recommend his Church to his Father, and intercede for all believers!

18. Thus, "Holy Father, keep through thine own name, those whom thou hast given me; that they may be one, as we are. Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word. Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that the love wherewith thou hast loved me,

may be in them, and I in them." John 17:11, 17, 15, 20, 24, 26. Nor did he pray so for us only upon earth; for even now he continues his intercessions for us at the right hand of God. "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God;—let us come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Heb. 4:14, 16; 7:26; 9:11; Rom. 8:34.

19. A *fifth* argument is, *the testimony of the Holy Spirit*, who "beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" (Rom. 8:16), and this witness in our hearts cannot deceive us. For if this testimony be in us of a truth, we shall have a demonstrative evidence that we are God's children, and that he hears us in Christ when we pray unto him.

20. *Sixthly*, because God and Christ are with us, and dwell in us *by faith*, how can we suppose that God will not hear our sighs and groans? "Thou understandest my thought afar off. There is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether." Ps. 139:2, 4. Think not, therefore, that God is separated from thee by any distance of place, that may hinder thy prayers from coming to him, "for he is in thee, and thou in him." Acts 17:28; John 17:23. Since, therefore, he lives and works in thee, why should he not hear thy prayers? "Lord, all my desire is before thee; and my groaning is not hid from thee?" Ps. 38:10. "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight." Ps. 19:14.

21. *Seventhly*, because the Holy Spirit, who is truly God, is also the Spirit of prayer, and himself maketh intercession in us with sighs and groanings unutterable. Zech. 12:10; Rom. 8:26. Why then shouldest thou imagine that God will not see, hear, and regard that which he himself works in thee? Therefore it is impossible that even the feeblest sigh proceeding from the Holy Spirit in us, and tending towards God, can be lost or come to nought. For as it proceeds from God, so it goes to him; and whatsoever is in him cannot perish. The deeds are wrought in God, and will be made manifest. John 3:21.

22. *Eighthly*, God is not forgetful like men, as "a book of remembrance is written before him, for them that fear the Lord, and that think upon his name" (Mal. 3:16): so that he cannot be forgetful of our prayers. God cannot forget that which is good, nor will he call the sins of the penitent to remembrance. So mighty and so abundant is the grace of God, that he blots out our sins, and calls not our transgressions to mind. But the good which he himself has wrought in us, he can never forget; for then he must forget himself and his own works. It is therefore impossible that God should disregard those prayers which his own Holy Spirit works in us; any more than he can forget his word, or be unmindful of his promise. "Since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still," saith God by the prophet. Jer. 31:20. And again, "Thou tellest my wanderings; put thou my tears into thy bottle." Ps. 56:8. So he assures us that "He will ever be mindful of his covenant." Ps. 111:5. And what is this covenant? Nothing else but the remission of our sins, confirmed to us by the death of Christ, and sealed by his Holy Spirit. Eph. 1:13.

23. And now, perhaps, thou wilt say, If these things are so, how comes

it to pass that God does not hear and grant my petitions? I have often prayed, and called, and sighed, and all to no purpose.

24. Thus much, indeed, must be granted, that many a man prays a great while for that which he does not obtain; and thence we judge that his prayers are not heard. What then becomes of these our reasons for believing that prayer will assuredly be heard? This is a very great trial, and has given much disturbance to many sincere and well-disposed souls.

25. But here we must observe, that the certainty of God's hearing our prayers, is incontestably proved by the arguments already produced, which are built upon an immovable foundation; whence it appears, that God does as certainly hear our prayers, as He is (1.) merciful, and a lover of mankind. (2.) As he is true in all his promises, yea, eternal truth itself. (3.) As he has a fatherly tenderness for us. (4.) As Jesus Christ is our mediator. (5.) As God and Christ dwell in us; which are all truths so certain and evident, that no believing heart ought to question them.

26. But we complain that God does not presently give us what we ask for, and, therefore, that our prayers are not heard. For this two reasons may be given: 1. That God hears our prayers, regarding more our happiness than our desires. 2. That he reserves to himself the liberty of bestowing the blessings which we ask, either upon our bodies or our souls, as he shall think most proper. Thus, perhaps, we ask of God some temporal blessings, who seeing them to be unfit for us, gives us spiritual ones; by which means we not only receive what we prayed for, but so much the more, as the good of the soul is to be preferred to that of the body. For as the soul is much more noble than the body, and spiritual blessings are more excellent than earthly; so much better is it for us, that God should give us his eternal and spiritual blessings rather than those transitory and fading enjoyments in which we are generally most delighted. He hears our prayers, not always with respect to our bodies, but to our souls; which is of far greater importance. If it should please God to visit you with some bodily disease, and you pray for health, doubt not; your prayers will be heard, and you shall certainly enjoy, if not the health of your body, yet the health of your soul, which is much to be preferred. Every man in his sound senses must think so. What advantage would it be to have the body in health, but a sinful, distempered soul, liable to eternal death? When it is well with the soul, a man may say with David, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee. My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever." Ps. 73 : 25, 26. And with the suffering Job, "I know that my Redeemer liveth." Job 19 : 25. And from Him the soul may derive life. Therefore David, comparing spiritual blessings with earthly, tells us: "The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver." Ps. 119 : 72.

27. But, perhaps, you will say that you pray for both; the health of your soul as well as of your body; and for spiritual blessings, as well as temporal. To this the Lord himself answers thee, "My grace is sufficient for thee" (2 Cor. 12 : 9); which was the reply given to St. Paul, though he had desired to be answered in his own

way. And thus it appears, that God always hears our prayers, if not with regard to our bodies, yet certainly to our souls.

28. Besides, God has reserved to himself the liberty of accomplishing our desires either in this world, or the next, as he shall deem most proper. Wherefore if thou dost not receive the blessings for which thou prayest, consider that it is not good for thee to enjoy them here, but that the answer to thy prayers is reserved for the other life, which is more noble and durable, and more capable of pure enjoyments than this. There the Lord will bestow on thee a thousandfold, for all that He seemed to deny thee here. As He cannot forget our prayers, so He cannot fail to answer them graciously; if not in this life, yet certainly in that which is to come. As many prayers as thou offerest up here, so many blessings shalt thou receive hereafter; for then "we shall reap if we faint not." Gal. 6 : 9. Then will the Lord say to the believing soul, "Behold thy prayer which thou offeredst to me. See, here is that for which thou didst pray, and a thousand times more than thou didst desire." And for this time of retribution we must patiently wait.

29. That man would be a very foolish husbandman, who would expect to reap as soon as he had sown; and who, when he had done this, would cry out with tears, that he had sown much seed, but could see no sign of harvest. Thou fool! wait till the season of harvest arrives, and then thou shalt receive the fruits of thy labor with a blessed increase. These are the complaints which many people make: "I have prayed," says one, "so often; I have so often sighed from the bottom of my soul; but I see no prospect of being heard, so that all my prayers, and sighs, and tears, are in vain." Ah, impatient soul! Thou hast scarcely sowed, and dost thou already talk of harvest? Wait for the precious harvest of eternal life, and thou shalt reap an abundant crop of glory! "For whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Gal. 6 : 7. There thou shalt gather with joy the fruit of the numerous prayers, which, as so many precious seeds, thou hast sown in tears. Psalm 126 : 5. This is the word and promise of God, which shall certainly be fulfilled, either here or in the other world. Thus, when thou art taking thy last sad farewell of a dying child, husband, wife, or friend, thou must consider that this is the season in which the bodies of thy friends, and thine own also, are, as it were, to be sown and committed to the earth; but that the harvest of the resurrection is at hand, when "the angels, the reapers, shall gather the sheaves, and put them into barns." Matt. 13 : 30, 39. There we shall find that our prayers, sighs, and tears were not lost, but only sent beforehand, to be received again with usury, finding all things in God that ever our souls could conceive or desire. So the promises of God, and the arguments produced to sustain them, shall stand firm and unshaken in Christ Jesus, to be eternally fulfilled to all believing souls, to their everlasting joy and salvation, for which we shall render eternal thanks and praises to God.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

SEVEN HELPS OR AIDS FOR OUR INFIRMITIES IN PRAYER.

Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.—Rom. 8: 26, 27.

SINCE our prayers are, alas! very weak and imperfect, let us see what assistance God has given us in his holy word, in order to help us in that duty.

2. The *first* help is our only Mediator and Advocate, Jesus Christ, the Son of God. 1 John 2: 2. He is our advocate, and pleads our cause before God, when we are hardly able to express what we want. He is therefore called the *Logos*, or the eternal *Word* of the Father, because God by him has discovered his will to us; as He is also called the Mediator, because He pleads our cause before God. A type of Him we have in Moses, the mediator of the Old Testament; to whom the people, flying from the face of God in Mount Sinai, said, "Speak thou with us" (Exod. 20: 19). And when Moses complained that he was slow of speech, and of a slow tongue, when he was commanded to appear before Pharaoh; God tells him, "Aaron, thy brother, can speak well. He shall be to thee instead of a mouth." Exod. 4: 10, 14, 16. So we also, when we should pray, are dull and slow of speech, and therefore we must fly to Christ, our heavenly Aaron, who is to us instead of a mouth. The same thing is expressed to us by the mercy-seat. Exod. 25: 17, 21. Therefore Christ commands us to pray in his name (John 16: 23), who is our eternal High Priest, having an everlasting priesthood (Heb. 7: 16), interceding for us (Rom. 8: 34), "in whom we have boldness, and access with confidence by the faith of him." Eph. 3: 12.

3. The *second* help is God the Holy Ghost. "I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace, and of supplication." Zech. 12: 10. This spirit is given us as a testimony of the divine grace, and of our adoption. Hence St. John says, "Hereby know we that we dwell in him, because he hath given us of his Spirit." 1 John 4: 13. And St. Paul, "Ye have not received the spirit of bondage, but the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." Rom. 8: 15, 16. He was also typified by the anointing of the priests under the law. Exod. 28: 41; 29: 7. Thus God has anointed us with the Spirit of Christ (1 John 2: 20); that we should offer to him daily the fruit of our lips. Ps. 69: 30, 31; Heb. 13: 15. This Spirit of God is the author of all those devout aspirations which we meet with, such as: "O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do." Dan. 9: 19.

4. The *third* help to strengthen us in prayer, is found in *the promises of God*. "Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee." Ps. 50: 15. "He shall call upon me, and I will an-

swer him." Ps. 91 : 15. See also Ps. 145 : 19; Luke 11 : 11, 13, and 18. "Before they call, I will hear." Isa. 60 : 24. "The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayers." Ps. 34 : 16. "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered." Joel 2 : 32. "Ask, seek, knock." Matt. 7 : 7. "The Lord is rich (in mercy, Eph. 2 : 4) to all that call upon him." Rom. 10 : 12. See also Luke 11 : 11–13; 18 : 6, 7.

5. The *fourth* help in prayer, is *the remembrance of the saints*, whose prayers God has heard. Look at the examples of the ancients, and be strengthened. And, indeed, we must needs be so, when we seasonably call to mind instances of God's providence and divine assistance. Upon this foundation all the prophets of old built their prayers. Thus, when God was angry with Israel for the sin of the golden calf, and said to Moses: "Let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them" (Ex. 32 : 10); "then Moses his chosen stood before him in the breach," as the Psalmist expresses it (Ps. 106 : 23), putting God in mind of his former mercies, saying, "Lord, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people, which thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt, with great power, and with a mighty hand? Wherefore should the Egyptians speak and say, For mischief did he bring them out to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people, etc. And the Lord repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people." Exod. 32 : 11–14.

6. David had recourse to the same remedy in almost all his Psalms; putting God in mind, as it were, of his former mercies, goodness, and faithfulness. So Ps. 25 : 6, "Remember thy tender mercies." Ps. 77 : 5, etc., "I have considered the days of old, the years of ancient times," etc. Ps. 85 : 1–6, "Lord, thou hast been favorable unto thy land: thou hast brought back the captivity of Jacob. Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people; thou hast covered all their sin. Thou hast taken away all thy wrath; thou hast turned thyself from the fierceness of thine anger. Turn us, O God of our salvation, and cause thine anger toward us to cease. Wilt thou be angry with us forever? Wilt thou draw out thine anger to all generations? Wilt thou not revive us again; that thy people may rejoice in thee?"

7. How admirably does the prophet Isaiah use the same form of supplication (chap. 63 : 10–16), putting God in mind of his former mercies, and opening, as it were, by this key, the immense treasures of his compassion. "Where is he that brought them up out of the sea, with the shepherd of his flock? where is he that put his Holy Spirit within him? That led them by the right hand of Moses, with his glorious arm, dividing the water before them, to make himself an everlasting name? That led them through the deep, as a horse in the wilderness, that they should not stumble? As a beast goeth down into the valley, the Spirit of the Lord caused him to rest: so didst thou lead thy people, to make thyself a glorious name. Look down from heaven, and behold from the habitation of thy holiness and of thy glory; where is thy zeal, and thy strength, the sounding of thy bowels, and of thy mercies towards me? Are they restrained? Doubtless thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel

acknowledge us not: thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer; thy name is from everlasting."

8. This prayer of the prophet is founded upon these arguments: (1.) Because the love of God is *eternal*, therefore it will not be withheld from *me*. (2.) I acknowledge myself to be a sinner, but, at the same time, I remember that thy grace has been extended to sinners who repented. "Remember not the sins of my youth." Ps. 25 : 7. (3.) My sins have been very great, but let thy mercy also be great. (4.) Remember that I am the work of thine own hands. "Remember, I beseech thee, that thou hast made me as the clay; and wilt thou bring me into dust again? Thy visitation hath preserved my spirit." Job 10 : 9, 12.

9. The *fifth* comfort in prayer is, *the tender love of God* to mankind, and his promises to help the afflicted. "Look upon mine affliction and my pain; and forgive all my sins." Ps. 25 : 18. Again, "This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him." Ps. 34 : 6. Thus we are assured that God does not despise the miseries of the distressed, although proud men may do it. For God judges not as corrupt man judges; he has not eyes of flesh, nor doth he see as man seeth. Job 10 : 4. And as it generally happens among us, that the more need a man has of friends, the fewer he finds; so, on the other hand, God has a more tender and particular regard for him that is destitute and afflicted. "The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart, and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit." Ps. 34 : 18. "Thou hast seen it; for thou beholdest mischief and spite, to requite it with thy hand: the poor committeth himself unto thee; thou art the helper of the fatherless." Ps. 10 : 14. And, indeed, such are the proper objects of divine mercy. To enhance the comfort and certainty of these promises, the Psalmist mentions various classes of the afflicted; so that none who are in distress may despair: "The Lord executeth judgment for the oppressed; which giveth food to the hungry. The Lord looseth the prisoners; the Lord openeth the eyes of the blind; the Lord raiseth them that are bowed down; the Lord loveth the righteous; the Lord preserveth the strangers; he relieveth the fatherless and widows." Ps. 146 : 7–9. To this may be referred what the prophet Isaiah says, "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at my word." Isa. 66 : 2. And "The expectation of the poor shall not perish forever." Ps. 9 : 18. And "He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer." Ps. 102 : 17.

10. The *sixth* help is, the consideration of *God's unspeakable compassion*. He puts a better construction upon our prayers than we intended, and understands our necessities more perfectly than we can express them. He makes merciful allowance for our infirmities in prayer; according to the words of Abraham, "Let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak." Gen. 18 : 30. Hence St. Paul says, "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort, who comforteth us in all our tribulation." 2 Cor. 1 : 3. Compare this with Ps. 103 : 8. By virtue of this compassion of God, none of our prayers are in vain. God keeps an exact account of all our sighs and tears (Ps. 56 : 8), for the sake of those tears which Christ our blessed Saviour shed, who, in the days of his flesh, offered

up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears. Heb. 5 : 7.

11. The *seventh* help in prayer, is the remembrance of *the covenant of grace*, which God has made with us. "This shall be the covenant," etc. Jer. 31 : 33. And, "The covenant of my peace shall not be removed, saith the Lord, that hath mercy on thee." Isa. 54 : 10. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come! I will make an everlasting covenant with you." Isa. 55 : 1, 3. In this covenant of grace the assurance that our prayers shall be heard is contained. "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near." Isa. 55 : 6.

12. What we have said upon this head, is most happily exemplified in the prayer of Daniel. "O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments.—And now, O Lord our God, that hast brought thy people forth out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and hast gotten thee renown, as at this day." (Here is the putting God in mind of his former mercies.) "Hear, O our God, the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord's sake." (This is pleading the name and merits of Jesus the Messiah.) "O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do." (These are the groans of the Holy Spirit.) "O my God, incline thine ear, and hear; open thine eyes, and behold our desolations" (in regard of his promise); "because for our sins, and the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and thy people are become a reproach to all that are about us." (Here is a confession of sin, and an acknowledgment of misery.) "For we do not present our supplications before thee, for our righteousnesses, but for thy great mercies" (this is an acknowledgment of man's unworthiness, and of God's mercy, which is followed with a remembrance of the covenant); "For thy city and thy people are called by thy name." Dan. 9 : 4, 15, 17, 18, 19, 16.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE CONVERSATION OF A BELIEVING SOUL WITH GOD.

Wilt thou be angry with us forever? Wilt thou draw out thine anger to all generations? Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee? Shew us thy mercy, O Lord, and grant us thy salvation.—Ps. 85 : 5–7.

THESE words contain the familiar discourse of the devout and faithful soul with God. Who would venture to talk so freely to an offended prince? But so indulgent is God to a believing soul, that he gives liberty to come freely and without restraint into his presence. As soon as the believer enters, God asks, "What is thy desire? come near, and be not afraid." This is represented to us in the case of Bathsheba (1 Kings 1 : 16), going

into the presence-chamber of king David, and making her petition. Upon which, the king sware unto her with an oath. So also in that of Esther, whom, so soon as she came into his presence, the king touched with his golden sceptre. Est. 5 : 1.

2. It is held to be an act of singular grace and favor, if a king vouchsafe to talk familiarly with his subjects. It was upon this account that the Roman emperor Titus was called *The delight of mankind*, for his gracious treatment of all who were near him, filled them with joy. But how much greater favor and happiness is it, that God, the Lord of lords, and King of kings (whom the Psalmist calls, "The most high and terrible Lord, a great King over all the earth"), (Ps. 47 : 2), should not only talk with miserable men, who, as Abraham says, "are but dust and ashes" (Gen. 18 : 27); but should even converse kindly with rebellious sinners, who are at enmity with him through sin. Isa. 59 : 2. So that when a Christian considers, on the one hand, the greatness and majesty of God; and the impurity, corruption, misery, and vileness of human nature on the other hand, he cannot but cry out with David, "What is man that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" Ps. 8 : 4. The most righteous man living must acknowledge himself to be unworthy to converse with God. This was the sentiment of the devout Abraham, who therefore excuses his presuming to intercede with God for the Sodomites, saying, "Let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak" (Gen. 18 : 30, 32): and yet every time that Abraham speaks, God vouchsafes to answer. And as he is the father of "them which are of faith" (Gal. 3 : 7), he gives us a notable example of the devout soul's conversation with God.

3. It is therefore a most certain and undoubted truth, that whensoever the faithful soul calls upon God by prayer, he never fails to answer by the divine consolations of his Spirit. An instance of this we have, where the Psalmist calls upon God in these words: "Lord, thou hast been favorable unto thy land. Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people; thou hast turned thyself from the fierceness of thine anger. Wilt thou not revive us again? Shew us thy mercy, O Lord, and grant us thy salvation. I will hear what God the Lord will speak." Ps. 85 : 1, etc. The answer he received in his heart; therefore he says: "His salvation is nigh them that fear him." Ver. 9. And as he here prays, that he may hear what the Lord God will say concerning him; God answers him, "Hear, O my people, and I will testify unto thee." Ps. 50 : 7. The afflicted soul prays, "O Lord, rebuke me not in thine anger." Ps. 6 : 1. To which God answers, "The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy." Ps. 103 : 8. The soul says, "Whither shall I flee from thy presence?" Ps. 139 : 7. To which the Lord answers, "Come unto me, all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Matt. 11 : 28. The soul says, "I know, O Lord, that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh, to direct his steps." Jer. 10 : 23. To which it is answered, "I will instruct thee, and teach thee in the way in which thou shalt go; I will guide thee with mine eye." Ps. 32 : 8. The believing soul prays, "Teach me thy way, O Lord; I will walk in thy truth." Ps. 86 : 11. To which the Lord answers, "I am the way, the truth, and

the life" (John 14 : 6); the *way*, if thou wouldest not wander; the *truth*, if thou wouldest not be deceived; the *life*, if thou wouldest avoid eternal death. The believing soul complains, "There is no soundness in my flesh, because of thine anger; neither is there any rest in my bones, because of my sin. My wounds stink and are corrupt, because of my foolishness." Ps. 38 : 3, 5. To which it is answered, "The chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." Isa. 53 : 5. The devout soul says, "Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed: save me, and I shall be saved." Jer. 17 : 14. It is answered, "Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases." Ps. 103 : 3. The soul complains, and cries out: I have sinned above the number of the sands of the sea. To which God answers by the prophet Isaiah, "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins." Isa. 43 : 25; 44 : 22. The soul cries out, Alas! I am a grievous sinner. And Jesus Christ answers, "I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Matt. 9 : 13. The soul prays, "Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions." Ps. 25 : 7. To which God answers, "If the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die. All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him." Ezek. 18 : 21, 22. The soul cries out, "Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin." Ps. 51 : 3. To which God answers, "Though your sins be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Isa. 1 : 18. "Lord, enter not into judgment with thy servant; for in thy sight shall no man living be justified." Ps. 143 : 2. To which it is answered, "God sent not his Son into the world, to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned." John 3 : 17, 18. The soul prays, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." Ps. 51 : 10. To which it is answered, "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes." Ezek. 36 : 26, 27. The soul says, "I am bowed down greatly; I go mourning all the day long." Ps. 38 : 6. To which it is answered, "The Lord hath sent me to comfort all that mourn." Isa. 61 : 2. It is said, "Look upon mine affliction and my pain." Ps. 25 : 18. And it is answered, "To him will I look, that is poor, and of a contrite spirit." Isa. 66 : 2. "Thou tellest my wanderings." Ps. 56 : 8. To which the Lord answers, "The very hairs of your head are all numbered." Matt. 10 : 30. The soul cries out, "When shall I come and appear before God?" Ps. 42 : 2. To which is answered, "Where I am, there shall also my servant be." John 12 : 26. The soul complains, "How long, O Lord, wilt thou forget me? forever? How long wilt thou hide thy face from me? How long shall I take counsel in my soul, having sorrow in my heart daily? How long shall mine enemy be exalted over me?" Ps. 13 : 1, 2. To which is answered, "For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee." Isa. 54 : 7, 8. Compare thy present suffering with God's eternal grace. Wait for the promise, which, though late, will surely be fulfilled at last. Hab. 2 : 3. The soul says, "Thou art my God; be not far from me; for

trouble is near; for there is none to help." Ps. 22 : 10, 11. To which it is answered, "I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honor him." Ps. 91 : 15. The soul prays, "Lighten my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death." Ps. 13 : 3. To which it is answered, "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death." Hosea, 13 : 14. The soul says, "I have a desire to depart, and to be with Christ." Phil. 1 : 23. To which Christ answers, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." Luke 23 : 43.

4. In a word, the Holy Scripture is nothing else but a conversation of the devout soul with God. Whenever the soul raises itself to God, and spreads its misery and complaints before him, then God answers it by some internal comfort, or by the words and promises of the Holy Scriptures.

CHAPTER XL.

A CONVERSATION BETWEEN FAITH AND THE MERCY OF GOD.

Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.—Ps. 85 : 10.

THE goodness of God comes forth to meet us, and gives merciful answers to the prayers of faith; "for mercy shall compass us about." Ps. 32 : 10. It calls to us: "Return, saith the Lord, and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful, and I will not keep anger forever. Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the Lord thy God." Jer. 3 : 12, 13. To which faith answers, "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness; according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out my transgressions." Ps. 51 : 1. Mercy calls, "Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." John 6 : 37. Faith answers, "Draw me; we will run after thee." Cant. 1 : 4. Mercy says, "The Lord hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to comfort all that mourn." Isa. 61 : 1, 2. Faith answers out of Psalm 51 : 12: "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free Spirit." Mercy says, out of Isaiah 43 : 25 and 44 : 22, "I have blotted out as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins." Faith answers out of Psalm 25 : 18, "Look upon mine affliction and my pain, and forgive all my sins." Mercy comforts us and says, out of Psalm 103 : 13, "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him." To which faith answers, out of Isaiah 64 : 8, "But now, O Lord, thou art our Father." Mercy says, "Come unto me." Matt. 11 : 28. Faith answers, "Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul." Ps. 25 : 1. Mercy says, "Thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; yet return again to me, saith the Lord." Jer. 3 : 1. Faith answers, "I will arise and go to my Father, and will say unto him: Father, I have

sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son; make me as one of thy hired servants." Luke 15 : 18, 19. Mercy says, "This my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found." Luke 15 : 24. To which faith answers, "I have trusted in thy mercy; my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation." Ps. 13 : 5. Mercy proclaims, out of Isaiah 55 : 1, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters." To which faith answers, "As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God; when shall I come and appear before God?" Ps. 42 : 1, 2. Mercy says, "Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases." Ps. 103 : 3. Faith exclaims, "Enter not into judgment with thy servant." Ps. 143 : 2. Mercy says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." John 14 : 6. Faith answers, "Shew me thy way, O Lord; teach me thy paths. Lead me in thy truth, and teach me." Ps. 25 : 4, 5. Mercy promises, "I will ransom them from the power of the grave: I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction." Hosea 13 : 14. Faith answers, "He that is our God, is the God of salvation; and unto God the Lord belong the issues from death." Ps. 68 : 20. Mercy says, "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." John 11 : 25. To which faith answers, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God." Job 19 : 25, 26. Mercy says, "Fear thou not; behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands." Isa. 41 : 10; 49 : 16. "Thou art mine; neither shall any man pluck thee out of my hand." John 10 : 28. To which faith answers, "Into thine hand I commit my spirit; thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth." Ps. 31 : 5.

CHAPTER XLI.

THE GREAT BENEFITS, AND THE GREAT EFFICACY OF PRAISE OFFERED TO GOD.

In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord. I call to remembrance my song in the night; I commune with mine own heart.—Ps. 77 : 2.

THIS passage is an excellent rule of life, teaching every man how to conduct himself under the cross. As the word of God is the rule of our life in prosperity, according to the Psalmist: "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye" (Ps. 32 : 8); and "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory" (Ps. 73 : 24): yea, moreover, as the word of God ought to be the rule of our faith, as the Psalmist tells us, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Ps. 119 : 105): and "Hold

up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not" (Ps. 17 : 5)—so also ought it to be our rule and direction in bearing the cross, as David teaches us, saying, "In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord;" that is, I will look up to God, who has laid this cross upon me, and beg of him comfort and assistance in the day of my trouble.

2. Hence may every Christian learn, when he is in affliction, not to fix his thoughts too much upon the immediate causes or instruments of his sufferings; but to lift up his heart to God; to apply to himself the divine promises; to pray and sing praises to his God: and these are the true and certain consolations of an afflicted soul. David says, "In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord." As a mind oppressed with grief eases itself by communicating its troubles to a faithful friend, so is our afflicted spirit refreshed and comforted when we offer prayer and thanksgiving to God. Thus David "called to remembrance his song in the night, and communed with his own heart" (Ps. 77 : 6); that is, when it was night he longed earnestly for the morning, that he might rise and comfort his weary soul by prayers and thanksgiving unto God his Comforter: in the mean time, he communed with his own heart, and poured out his soul in secret; and God, who saw and heard in secret, who understood even the most secret sighs and breathings of his dejected spirit, comforted, strengthened, and refreshed him.

3. Amongst other things that may be learned from this beautiful passage of the Psalmist, this is one, that the singing of holy hymns and praises to God, proceeding from a truly devout soul, are attended with great advantages and spiritual blessings.

4. The truth of this appears, 1. From nature itself. 2. From the efficacy of prayer. 3. From the examples found in the Old Testament. 4. From the examples in the New. 5. From the examples of holy men in both, who were by this means filled with the Holy Ghost. 6. From the nature and properties of the Psalms. 7. From the frequent use of the blessed Psalms among the ancients, whenever they were under any adversity. All these considerations prove that there is a great virtue or efficacy in psalms and hymns of praise. By this I would not be understood to mean nothing but bare words and empty sounds, void of faith and devotion; but rather such a vigorous faith, such an ardent devotion, as may break forth into holy hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in the heart unto the Lord. Let us briefly describe this subject.

5. As to the first, namely, the book of the world, or nature, it is clear that the praise of God is the great end of the whole creation. That this is the grand employment of the angelical choirs, appears from many passages in the Revelation of St. John, as also from Isaiah 6 : 3 and the 148th Psalm; which, inviting all creatures to praise God, for whose glory they were created, begins with the angels (ver. 2), "Praise ye him, all his angels; praise ye him, all his hosts." From the angelical he descends to the sidereal world, saying, "Praise ye him, sun and moon: praise him, all ye stars of light." To which may be referred the words of Job (chap. 38 : 7): "When the morning stars sang together." Thence he descends to the sea, calling on the waters, and all the numerous inhabitants of the waters, to praise the God that made them. Thence

looking up to the regions of the air, he calls to "the fire and hail, snow and vapor, stormy wind fulfilling his word." Thence he passes to the earth: "mountains and all hills; fruitful trees, and all cedars." Thence to the living creatures: "beasts, and all cattle; creeping things and flying fowl." Thence to men, beginning with the rulers of the world: "kings of the earth, and all people; princes, and all judges of the earth. Both young men and maidens, old men and children, praise the name of the Lord." And lastly, to the church of God, "his saints, a people near unto him—praise ye the Lord."

6. The second argument was the efficacy of the prayer of faith. This is attested by the word of God, the examples of holy men, and daily experience. For we are assured by all the promises of God, that not one devout prayer, not one sigh or tear, comes from us in vain. "Put thou my tears into thy bottle." Ps. 6:9; 56:8. "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy." Ps. 126:5. "The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth." Ps. 145:18. Nothing, indeed, in this world can be successful without prayer; forasmuch as every good and every perfect gift cometh down from God, and must be asked of him. Without constant prayer a man can neither live nor die in peace. Now, as the offering of praise to God is nothing else but the prayer of a devout soul overflowing with divine joy, in which holy men of God have celebrated and conveyed to posterity the mercies and wonders of God their Creator; it is plain that the singing of praises to God is an act of devotion, full of spiritual comfort and advantage.

7. Thirdly, this is confirmed by many examples found in the Old Testament. Exod. 15; Deut. 32; 1 Sam. 2; Isa. 12; 26; 38; 64; Jon. 2; Hab. 3; and the whole Book of Psalms.

8. Fourthly, this is confirmed by the examples of the New Testament; especially those two divine hymns of Mary and Zacharias (Luke 1:46, 68), of which the Christian Church has appointed one to be sung in the morning, and the other in the evening, as a morning and evening sacrifice unto God; thereby instructing us, that singing psalms and praises unto God ought to begin and end the day. Such, too, is the exhortation of the Psalmist, "It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O Most High: to shew forth thy lovingkindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night." Ps. 92:1, 2. But why such lovingkindness "in the morning"? Because "it is new every morning." Lam. 3:23. And why such "faithfulness every night"? Because "the Lord, that neither slumbereth nor sleepeth," is our guardian by night. Ps. 121:3. To this we may add what we are told by St. Matthew (chap. 26:30), that Jesus Christ himself at his last Supper, sung a hymn with his disciples. And St. Paul says to the Ephesians (chap. 5:18, 19), "Be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; giving thanks always, etc." And again: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." Col. 3:16, 17. And St. James says, "Is any among

you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms." James 5 : 13.

9. Fifthly, by the praises offered to God by the holy men of the Old Testament and the New, who were filled with the Holy Ghost. Of this we have two instances. First, when Samuel had anointed Saul to be king, he gave him a sign, saying, "Thou shalt meet a company of prophets with a psaltery, and a tabret, and a pipe, and a harp, before them; and they shall prophesy. And the Spirit of the Lord will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man." 1 Sam. 10 : 5, 6. The second is, when Saul had sent messengers to take David, they met several companies of prophets, and both they and Saul himself began to prophesy. 1 Sam. 19 : 19–24. Similar to this is that which we read concerning Elisha (2 Kings 3 : 15), that when the minstrel began to play, that holy man prophesied.

10. In the Old Testament there were several kinds of divine music; some of trumpets, some of psalteries and harps, some of cymbals, and other kinds of musical instruments. From this some imagine that the *Songs of Degrees*, as some of the Psalms are called, took their names. For they did not sing all the Psalms to the same instrument, but adapted their instruments to their subject, whether it were cheerful or sorrowful. All these various kinds of music with which, under the Old Testament, they sang praises unto God, being a part of the external ceremonial service, have now ceased; and our spirit, soul, mind, and mouth are become the trumpet, psaltery, harp, and cymbal of God. To which St. Paul alludes, when he says, "Singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." Col. 3 : 16. By which expression we are by no means forbidden, either in public or private, to praise God with voices or instruments of music; but it requires that all this be done with true devotion, in the spirit, and from the heart, lest religion should be thought to consist in empty sounds and the external pomp of divine service. For the New Testament, see, for example, Acts 4 : 24–31.

11. Sixthly, the nature and properties of the Psalms prove the same thing. Some of them are supplicatory, others consolatory; some penitential, others doctrinal; and, lastly, others prophetical: from which variety of style and intention the devout soul may reap a correspondent variety of comforts and benefits.

12. Seventhly, we are instructed by the examples of Moses and David that songs of praise were used upon different occasions. As (1) *Against enemies.* These may be called prayers for protection. Such is Psalm 68, which the man of God sang when he was advancing against his enemies: "Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered." Some think that Psalm 91 was composed by David in the time of that great pestilence, which, in the space of three days, swept away 70,000 men. 2 Sam. 24:15. And I doubt not that many a man has been protected in national calamities by a proper use of this Psalm. (2) *In time of victory over enemies.* These we may call Psalms of victory. Thus David, when he had gained six victories, composed the 18th Psalm, as may be gathered from 2 Sam. 22 : 1. So Jehoshaphat marched against the Moabites with singers going before him, who were to bless and praise the Lord with a loud voice;

and he conquered. 2 Chron. 20 : 21, etc. (3) *In great calamities.* Thus we read (1 Sam. 21:13) that David, when he changed his behavior before Achish, composed the 34th Psalm, as appears by the title. So he sang Psalm 3, when he fled from Absalom. So when the apostles, in great difficulties, prayed in the words of the 2d Psalm, "the place was shaken where they were assembled together." Acts 4 : 31. And these are Psalms of mourning or lamentation. (4) There are also eucharistical Psalms. So David sung the 105th Psalm before the ark of the covenant. 1 Chron. 17 : 16. (5) There are complaining Psalms, as the 102d appears to be by the inscription; also some against calumniators, as the 4th, 7th, 52d; also against diseases, as the 30th.

13. Thus much concerning the efficacy and admirable benefits of divine hymns and thanksgivings. Whence it appears that it is the duty of a Christian to praise God as well as to pray to him every day. For (1), it being the constant employment of the holy angels to bless and praise God, when the Church on earth does the same, there arises thence a divine and heavenly communion betwixt the Church on earth and the Church in heaven; fulfilling, in some measure, that petition of the Lord's prayer, "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." Matt. 6 : 10. Come, then, ye devout souls, and when ye retire into your closets to pour out your souls before God in secret, remember also to praise him with a Psalm of thanksgiving. (2) Moreover, it would be quite proper, and becoming a Christian, to accustom children, from their infancy, to sing psalms and praises unto God, according to the Psalmist, "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength, because of thine enemies" (Ps. 8 : 2): the advantage of which, is expressed in the following words—"that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger." (3) We are encouraged to this duty by God's gracious acceptance of it, and delight in it; upon which account the Psalmist calls upon him, saying, "Thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel." Ps. 22 : 3. (4) Experience itself teaches us that by divine hymns we kindle flames of devotion in our souls, and receive rich returns of spiritual joy, lively comfort, solid peace, and rest in God.

CHAPTER XLII.

THE REASONS FOR WHICH WE OUGHT DAILY TO OFFER PRAISES TO GOD.

Praise ye the Lord, O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good: for his mercy endureth forever. Ps. 106 : 1; 107 : 1; 118 : 1.

THUS saith the devout David, "Seven times a day do I praise thee, because of thy righteous judgments" (Ps. 119 : 164); that is, many times in a day do I sing praises in honor of thy holy name. By this he teaches us, that a man cannot spend his time better than by retiring at least once a day into his closet, and praising God in secret. Yea, though

his hands be employed in labor and business, yet may he, in the quiet stillness of his heart, offer up his praises unto God wheresoever he is. For the prayer of a true Christian is not confined to any certain time or place, since he worships "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:23); and the Spirit is not circumscribed by any limits of time or place. To which also relates the admonition of St. Paul, when he commands us "to sing with grace in our hearts to the Lord" (Col. 3:16); that being, indeed, the fittest place wherein God may be praised.

2. But as we are by nature dull and inactive in the discharge of this duty, therefore God has given us, in his Word, certain helps to quicken us.

3. The first of these is *his own command.* He made us, his servants and creatures, for his own glory, as we ourselves appoint servants to manage business for us. He, therefore, who does not daily praise God, was created by him in vain, and cannot be his servant. Hence we are commanded, over and over again, in Holy Scripture, above all things, to praise God. Thus, "Praise ye the Lord. Praise him, O ye servants of the Lord." Ps. 113:1. "O give thanks unto the Lord." Ps. 118:1. "Thou shalt glorify me." Ps. 50:15. This is an argument to us, that the chief part of our religious worship, our chief service in this world, and our happiness in the next, consist in the exercise of praise and thanksgiving; upon which account we ought to esteem it our greatest happiness and most honorable employment. So the holy Psalmist says, "My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips." Ps. 63:4. And again, "Delight thyself in the Lord, and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart." Ps. 37:4. O how truly happy, then, and blessed is he who is come to such perfection of divine worship as to delight in the Lord, and to be continually offering praises and thanks! "He shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple." Ps. 65:5. If we think it an honorable thing to be employed in the service of any earthly prince, how much more ought a man to rejoice when he considers that he may be admitted to the service of the Lord of lords, and King of kings, being, in his own nature, no better than dust and ashes, and a poor sinner! This single consideration ought to be of sufficient weight to encourage him to praise God daily.

4. Secondly, *the advantages that a man derives from this exercise,* is another argument. For since God has no need of our praises, and is neither the better nor the worse for our obedience or neglect; and since the most acceptable praise which we can offer him is, at best, but the fruit of "unclean lips" (Isa. 6:5), as the prophet Isaiah speaks, it follows that the advantage redounds only to ourselves, as being the means of drawing down upon us the favor and blessings of heaven: a thankful heart being the proper receptacle of divine grace. This, in short, is that which brings God down into our souls, and makes us truly the living temples of the Holy Ghost; and where God is, *there* is the fulness of divine blessing. Moreover, by the daily exercise of thanksgiving, we keep up communion with the blessed choirs of triumphant saints and angels in heaven. They are incessantly singing the praises of God above; whilst we below, by the same exercise, are conquering, by de-

grees, the enemies of our salvation (Ps. 18 : 29), till at length, by a constant practice of this divine duty, we are filled with an immovable assurance that we are united to God, and that we shall be for ever happy with him in heaven, according to the promise of our blessed Lord, "Where I am, there shall also my servant be." John 12:26. And now, would to God that wretched man would so lay these considerations to heart, and so sincerely endeavor to practise them, that every soul might become, in truth, a house of prayer!

5. Thirdly, we are encouraged to the daily practice of thanksgiving, from the consideration of *the compassion, the lovingkindness, and everlasting goodness of God.* This is an argument continually inculcated in the Book of Psalms, to teach us that the chief and fundamental reason why we ought continually to bless and praise God, is, because he is good and gracious, and "his mercy endureth for ever." No heart of man can conceive, nor tongue express, the height and depth of that love which disposes the great and mighty God to show himself thus loving and merciful to wretched mankind, who are dust and ashes, laden with iniquities, and ungrateful to God; and that he not only continues his wonted mercies to them, notwithstanding their repeated provocations; but is also perpetually dispensing fresh showers of blessings upon the whole rebellious race. And this is what every man must needs experience in himself. Look into thine own soul, whosoever thou art; what canst thou find there but misery and sin? Yet God continues merciful and long-suffering, is slow to anger, and not willing to punish thee as thy sins have deserved. This is a degree of mercy which, as thy own heart must confess, no man living does or can exercise towards his brethren. We cannot so long forbear to punish those that have offended us; and when we punish, mercy seldom pleads for the criminal, till we are satiated with vengeance; whereas the rod of God is often lifted up, but his mercy averts the impending stroke, and rescues the sinner from punishment. So that every man must confess that the punishments of heaven are not only less than we deserve, but are always qualified with a double portion of mercy. Whence it follows, that God is essentially and truly LOVE, which every man daily experiences in himself.

6. Read the Holy Scriptures and see how tenderly, yea, how affectionately God vouchsafes to deal with mankind, so that no father or mother upon earth can be more indulgent to their darling child. Thus, "Is Ephraim my dear son? is he a pleasant child? For since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still; therefore, my bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord." Jer. 31 : 20.

7. God not only bestows his favors plentifully both on our souls and bodies, but also does it with so much tenderness and good will, that, as he himself says, "He rejoices over us to do us good" (Jer. 32 : 41); as if he were glad to find men willing to be happy in the blessed manifestations of his love; which is, indeed, the truest demonstration that it is sincere. Were not God thus merciful, our very being would soon be at an end, which nothing but his infinite mercy can sustain; yea, "His lovingkindness is better than life itself" (Ps. 63 : 3), which "compasseth us about" (Ps. 32 :

10), as tender mothers embrace their helpless infants.

8. The same goodness of God discovers itself in all his creatures; in which, as in a glass, we may contemplate the wonderful riches of divine mercy: "The earth is full of the riches of God." Ps. 104 : 24. For whose sake was all that is good, both in heaven and earth, created? Not for Him certainly, who is Himself all-sufficient, and stands not in need of any creature. The sun, moon, and stars serve not to enlighten him; the fire, the air, the earth, and water do him no service, but us. And when he "fills our hearts with food and gladness" (Acts 14 : 17), it is his goodness that we taste, it is his bounty that feeds and nourishes us. He it is that gives us healthy and sound bodies, which are more valuable to us than an empire. If it should please God to turn the water into blood, as he did in Egypt (Exod. 7 : 20), we could not, with all our boasted treasure, purchase one single drop to relieve our greatest necessities. Or should he, as he did once (Exod. 10 : 22), cover the earth with thick darkness, no prince upon earth could, with all his riches, purchase one single gleam of light. Or what would all the world signify to him that should but for one moment be deprived of the benefit of the air? All these are very great blessings of God, but because they are common, few are so sensible of them as to be thankful for them. Reflect, moreover, on the mercies of redemption and sanctification, in which the goodness and grace of God so transcendently appear, that eternity itself would be too short to praise and magnify these blessings as we ought. To redeem a lost world is much more glorious than to create it at first; and to regenerate a man by a spiritual new birth, more wondrous than at first to produce him by a natural birth. Lastly, whosoever will carefully consider the works and providence of God, may read the plain characters of his mercy and love in every part of the creation.

9. Dull, ungrateful creatures that we are, how apt are we to forget our benefactor, and despise the hand that blesses us! God is thus led in mere mercy to use the rod of discipline, and to take away our worldly comforts from us, in order thereby to reduce us to a sober sense of ourselves, and of our dependence on him, to whom all our thanks are due. Thus God speaks by the prophet Hosea, "She did not know that I gave her corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and her gold: therefore will I return, and take them from her." Hosea 2 : 8. So that the *cross* is, as it were, the light by which we see and discover the true value of divine blessings, and who it is that bestows them. For ingratitude is the greatest degree of blindness, and the highest affront against God. And since the whole world is full of the glory of God, much more ought the heart of man to be full of it.

10. Indeed the excellency of the divine love discovers itself chiefly in this, that he bestows his favors even upon rebels and enemies. "For he maketh his sun to rise, and sendeth his rain on the just and on the unjust." Matt. 5 : 45.

11. The goodness and mercy of God herein appear still more illustrious, that though we continue ungrateful, and our hearts "cast forth wickedness as a fountain casteth forth her waters" (Jer. 6 : 7), yet he still strives to conquer our ingratitude by his goodness, and does not take his mercy from us;

as the Psalmist says, "His mercy endureth forever." Ps. 136 : 1. So that as the heart of man is, as it were, an abyss of iniquity (Jer. 17 : 9), so God is an abyss of mercy, an ever-flowing fountain of goodness, so much superior in kind, as well as in degree, to that of any created being, that he doeth nothing but good, and receives nothing in return but evil; which the uncreated and infinite Good alone could do or suffer. And when, provoked by our wickedness, he seems sometimes to lay aside his mercy, and "in anger to shut up his tender mercies" (Ps. 77 : 10), yet even that is nothing but paternal resentment, not tending to destruction, but so tempered with compassion, that mercy triumphs over judgment. So, "If his children forsake my law, I will visit their transgressions with the rod : nevertheless my lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him." Ps. 89 : 30–33. And, "In wrath remember mercy." Hab. 3 : 2. So, too, we read, "He doth not afflict willingly the children of men." Lam. 3 : 33. For punishment is, as it were, contrary to his nature and essential goodness. For though the Scriptures often speak of *God's being angry*, yet such expressions are used, after the manner of men, only in compliance with the weakness of human capacities. Yea, God is never angry with his faithful servants; but only with wicked and obstinate sinners; and when he corrects the former in mercy, he punishes the latter in his wrath; for "the wrath of God abideth on them." John 3 : 36. Hence David prays, "O Lord, rebuke me not in thine anger." Ps. 6 : 1. As if he had said, "Lord, chasten me with mercy, as a tender father corrects his beloved child." Wherefore, it is as impossible that the mercy and goodness of God should fail or cease towards mankind (though he sometimes afflicts us), as that the sun should actually be extinguished by a cloud, or the vast ocean be absorbed by a sponge. "For his mercy endureth forever." Ps. 136 : 1. And this is the reason of God's reconciliation and forgiveness, not once or twice, but as often as the sinner begins to repent and sue for mercy. This mercy does not last for a few hours, or a few days only, but forever; so that the entire nature and essence of God, infinite as it is, is nothing else but LOVE. No sooner does the sinner sincerely pray for pardon, but the merciful God freely bestows it, yea, he is more willing and ready to pardon, than we to ask it.

12. Now if God pours his blessings upon us so plentifully in this life, that we taste and enjoy them by all our senses; how much more fully shall we be convinced, in the other world, by most blessed experience, that his mercy endureth forever? If we receive so many mercies from him now in this vale of sin and misery, as that "in him we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 17 : 28), how much more glorious will his mercy appear hereafter, when we shall be cleansed from all sin, and rendered capable of the purest enjoyments?

13. Fourthly, the praises of God have been the special employment of all holy men. Most of the prophets of the Old Testament composed holy hymns, to the praise and honor of God. Thus did Moses (Exod. 15; Deut. 32), Hannah (1 Sam. 2), Jehoshaphat (2 Chron. 20), Hezekiah (Isa. 38), and Jeremiah (Lam. 3). David was, however, the most eminent, who is so fervent in the praise of God, as to say, that "His praise shall continually be in his mouth." Ps. 34 : 1. In the New Testament, the Virgin Mary (Luke 1 : 46–55), and Zacharias (Luke 1 : 68–

79); also St. Paul and St. Peter, in many places of their Epistles. These examples sufficiently show that they believed acts of thanksgiving and praise to be the most noble services which we can possibly perform in this valley of misery. And, therefore, if we are desirous to be partakers with the saints in glory, it is necessary that we should imitate their examples in praising and magnifying God.

14. Fifthly, all creatures invite us to praise God. Thus David speaks to them all, "Bless the Lord, all his works, in all places of his dominion." Ps. 103 : 22. And, indeed, every creature, in its way, gives glory to its Creator; for he has stamped such illustrious characters of his glory and goodness on them all, that they cannot conceal them. "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork." Ps. 19 : 1. And Job says, "Where wast thou, when the morning stars sang together?" Chap. 38 : 4, 7. For even the sun, the moon, and all the host of heaven, when they give their light, bear witness at the same time to the majesty and goodness of Him that made them. The earth praises God when it is fruitful and flourishing. The herbs and flowers, by their fragrance, beauty, and variety of colors, show forth the might and wisdom of their Maker. The birds with their songs; the trees with their fruits; the sea with its inhabitants (Ps. 104 : 25); in short, all the creatures in their several places, praise the God that made them, whilst they fulfil his will, and answer the end for which they were created. Ps. 148 : 1, etc. And not only so, but they call upon mankind, by the virtues and powers which God has implanted in them, as witnesses of his wisdom and goodness, to praise and glorify God. Whatever way we turn our eyes, we see so many marks of divine goodness, that one would think that nature was nothing but one great history of the glory of its Maker. But forasmuch as God has been more gracious and bountiful unto man than to any other of his creatures, mankind are certainly obliged to furnish larger and more frequent returns of gratitude than they.

15. Sixthly, we must know, that when we have done all that we can to set forth the greatness and majesty of God, the best and most devout of men must fall short of the dignity of a subject, which no tongue, either of men or angels, can worthily express. For "Who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord? who can show forth all his praise?" Ps. 106 : 2. The most exalted praises of holy men are more properly acts of admiration and wonder, than attempts to express to the full the infinite love and majesty of God. They have the will, but not the ability, to praise God in adequate terms. Thus holy David in many Psalms stirs up his soul, and all the powers thereof, to praise his God with thanksgiving. So Moses, "The Lord is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation. He is my God, and I will prepare him a habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him." Exod. 15 : 2. Observe, he calls God *his strength;* and were not that strength with us, in us, and above us, we should quickly be turned into dust, and vanish like a shadow. Therefore it is said: "Every man at his best state is altogether vanity." Ps. 39 : 5. Moses also calls God *his salvation;* for he is our righteousness against sin; our strength against infirmities; our refuge in persecution; our joy in sadness; and lastly our life in death.

16. And now, what is there in heaven or in earth that may be compared unto our God, with whom is such abundant salvation; who, by his power, sustains the heaven and the earth, and all that is therein (Isa. 40 : 12); who is so holy that all the angels adore him (Isa. 6 : 3), so "fearful in praises" (Exod. 15 : 11) that the heaven, the earth, and all that is under the earth, bow and tremble? He is so praiseworthy that all his works ought to be had in honor, and every creature ought to praise his Maker: so wise, so powerful, as to create all things out of nothing; to bring light out of darkness; righteousness out of sin; and life out of death. Should we now pass to the great work of our redemption, who can express it? He suffers his only Son to become man, that we might become the children of God. He suffers all pain as man, that we might enjoy everlasting felicity; he took upon him the form of a servant, that we might be partakers of his heavenly kingdom; lastly, he underwent death for us, that we, through him, might have life eternal. Such works, such love, who can worthily celebrate? Where is he that can explain how the infinite God, "whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain" (1 Kings 8 : 27), can yet dwell in us, and we in him? Or how he made our immortal souls, and will receive them to himself after their separation from the body? Or how he shall raise our dead bodies from the dust of the earth unto eternal life? It is, indeed, wonderful and strange, that that which is "mortal should put on immortality." 1 Cor. 15:53. Wherefore, praise the Lord, O my soul.

17. If any man, then, desires to answer the end of his creation, and not to be thought the only ingrate among all the works of God; if he desires to walk worthy of his Christian calling, and after death to be partaker with the saints of light and everlasting glory, let his soul praise the Lord, and let him beseech God that He would never suffer his soul to be unmindful or negligent of this duty. And those things which we cannot sufficiently praise in this world shall be worthily celebrated in the next, when "that which is in part shall be done away. For now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face." 1 Cor. 13 : 10, 12. Which may God grant, for Jesus Christ's sake.

CHAPTER XLIII.

TO PRAISE GOD IS THE HIGHEST AND MOST HONORABLE EMPLOYMENT OF MEN.

It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord—upon an instrument of ten strings, and upon the psaltery; upon the harp with a solemn sound. For thou, Lord, hast made me glad through thy work; I will triumph in the works of thy hands. O Lord, how great are thy works! and thy thoughts are very deep. A brutish man knoweth not; neither doth a fool understand this. Ps. 92 : 1–6.

THERE are six Psalms which have been distinguished by the name of Golden Songs, namely, 16, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, to show us that the praise of God and prayer are the spiritual and heavenly treasure of a believing

heart. And that this is the greatest honor man is capable of, appears hence. (1.) That a cheerful confidence in God is that which procures the soul the greatest liberty of access to him. Hence it is said, "Honor and majesty are before him; strength and beauty are in his sanctuary." Ps. 96:6. And that this freedom of access is the highest honor of man, the very angels themselves confess, who glory in that exalted privilege. "I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God." Luke 1:19.

2. The giving praise to God is a great honor and treasure of man, because (2) thereby we become like the angels in heaven. Therefore our blessed Saviour, pointing out the future glory of men, says, "They shall be as the angels of God." Matt. 22:30; Luke 20:36. This, though it is ultimately to be understood of the purity and other perfections of their glorified bodies in another life; in which respect we shall not only be like the angels, but also be conformed to the glorified body of our Lord Jesus Christ (according to Phil. 3:21, and 1 John 3:2, "It doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is") —yet even as no man can be like him in the other world, that has not been conformed to him in this; that is to say, that has not believed in him, imitated his holy life, followed him in his meekness and humility, and, in a word, perfectly clothed himself with the image of the patient, humble, afflicted and crucified Jesus, that he may be like him in his glorious, exalted, and perfect state in the other world; so also shall no man be like the angels in heaven, that has not endeavored to conform himself to their examples on earth. There is then no instance in which we can better imitate them here, than by offering up devout and incessant prayers and praises to God; for this is the employment of the holy angels. Isa. 6:3; Ps. 103:20. Whosoever then does this, imitates those blessed spirits, and maintains fellowship with them. Hence it follows, that to be continually celebrating the praises of God is the noblest and most honorable employment that man is capable of. And this may be done at any time, and in any place by a devout soul, praising from the ground of the heart. It is thence that the true praises of God proceed, according to that expression, "singing with grace in your hearts unto the Lord." Col. 3:16.

3. That singing praises to God is the greatest glory and highest honor that a man can receive, appears (3) hence; that by this a man becomes, as it were, the harp or instrument on which the Holy Spirit is perpetually sounding forth the praises of God. Of this we have a very beautiful representation, where the Evangelist saw a great multitude clothed in white, and following the Lamb of God; and "he heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps." Rev. 14:2. This was also indicated under the Old Testament by that admirable variety of musical instruments mentioned by David in Ps. 150. All these instruments express nothing else but the various gifts of the Holy Spirit, by which the name, the praise, the honor, the wisdom, the mercies, and wonderful works of God were to be published to the world; which instruments are now laid aside to make room for the divine harmony of *spiritual* music, even that of praise and thanksgiving to God. For what the musical instrument is to man, that

the soul of man is to the Spirit of God, being attuned and rendered harmonious by the hand that holds it. Thus it is said, "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast ordained strength." Ps. 8 : 2. But what greater glory can the heart, mouth, or soul of man desire and enjoy, than to be as so many organs or musical instruments of the Spirit of God? This is what David means, "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue" (2 Sam. 23 : 2); and the apostle, "Be ye filled with the Spirit: speaking to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." Eph. 5 : 18, 19.

4. That the praising of God is a man's greatest privilege, and most valuable treasure, appears (4) hence: because in that exercise is contained the greatest spiritual joy. Hence it is said, "Thou, Lord, hast made me glad through thy work; I will triumph in the works of thy hands." Ps. 92 : 4. And as in this divine joy consists the greatest part of the happiness of eternal life, and the kingdom of God within us, which we are told, "is peace and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Rom. 14 : 17); so whoever desires a foretaste of the happiness of that blessed state, may obtain it by the daily exercise of praise and thanksgiving. This, when it proceeds from a sincere heart, gives life and divine joy both to the soul and body; as we are told in Ps. 63, and Ps. 84. What is Paradise itself, but pure joy and unmixed pleasures; where "we taste and see that the Lord is good"? Ps. 34 : 8. And what is eternal life, but the abundance of this joy, "and pleasures at God's right hand for evermore"? Ps. 16 : 11.

5. The greatness and excellency of this duty appears (5) hence: that by it we are led to the contemplation of all the wonderful works of God, whence such rays of divine light and wisdom dart upon the soul, as scatter and dissipate the clouds of error and darkness in which men are naturally involved. Thus saith the Psalmist, "O Lord, how great are thy works! and thy thoughts are very deep. A brutish man knoweth not, neither doth a fool understand this." Ps. 92 : 5, 6. And St. Paul, "The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." 1 Cor. 2 : 10. Therefore, the more a man knows of God, the more he praises him; and the more he praises him, the more he increases in the knowledge of him. For the higher any one rises in the praises of God, so much the more deeply he descends into the contemplation of his nature and providence. I do not mean the presumptuous inquiries of some curious searchers into forbidden mysteries, but those riches of the divine wisdom which God often discovers to the soul that loves and praises him, and which strike her dumb by the excess of glory and sublime manifestations of Himself. If the queen of Sheba was so astonished at the riches and magnificence of Solomon's court, as to break out in these words, "Thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard. Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom" (1 Kings 10 : 7, 8), how much more should the devout soul be swallowed up in rapture and astonishment, at those revelations of divine light and glory which God frequently vouchsafes to them that love and praise him, causing them to cry out with David, "O, Lord, how great are thy works! and

thy thoughts are very deep"! Ps. 92 : 5. And again, "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will show them his covenant." Ps. 25 : 14. And again, "Thou shalt make me to know wisdom in the hidden part." Ps. 51 : 6. Therefore, as the queen of Sheba says, "Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and hear thy wisdom;" so those that continually praise God, are the servants of God, standing continually about his table, believing in spirit the divine wisdom, and hearkening to the word of God. This is the never-failing fountain of true wisdom, which one of the ancient fathers treats of, calling it "the deep ocean of divine wisdom." But sublime and glorious as it is, "a brutish man knoweth not; neither doth a fool understand this." In a word, the more closely a man approaches God by praise and thanksgiving, the clearer manifestations has he of the riches and treasures of the divine wisdom; which at the same time are hidden, and as it were locked up from those that are without understanding in the ways of God.

6. We may conclude that praising God is the highest honor, the most exalted privilege, and greatest benefit to man; because (6) by this man gains the victory over all his enemies, both Satan and men. See Psalm 8 : 2; 18 : 3, etc.; 118 : 5–15. We have a plain instance of this in the case of Jehoshaphat, who, with one divine hymn, routed a vast army of his enemies without loss of blood; as we find, 2 Chron. 20 : 21, 22. Such songs of victory are frequently to be met with in the Psalms: as Psalms, 18; 46; 47; 76, etc.

CHAPTER XLIV.

OF PATIENCE, WHICH TRIUMPHANTLY ENDURES THE CROSS, AND WAITS FOR THE PROMISED GLORY.

Ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.—Heb. 10 : 36.

TRUE Christian *patience* is that virtue by which, in all afflictions that cannot, by ordinary means, be avoided, we resign ourselves to the divine will, and submit entirely to it; choosing rather to suffer the greatest evils, than murmur against God, or let go our dependence on him.

2. The first reason or ground of this virtue is, *the counsel and gracious will of God*, by which we are appointed to sufferings and afflictions; according to Rom. 8 : 29: "Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son." As, therefore, God appointed his own beloved Son to the sufferings of the cross, that thereby he might bring him to glory; so also has he appointed all the true members of Christ to bear the cross, without which they cannot be his body. Eph. 5 : 30. To each of these he has marked, measured, and, as it were, weighed out, his

exact portion of affliction, which cannot be escaped, much less shaken off by impatience; but may be alleviated by obedience and humble submission, and overcome by the power of Jesus Christ.

3. The second reason why we ought to be patient is *the approaching consummation of all things;* at which time, as our blessed Lord has told us, "iniquity shall abound, and love shall wax cold." Matt. 24 : 12. The consequence of this must be that sincere Christians will be exposed to various afflictions, crosses, injuries, and sundry kinds of death ; for "all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." 2 Tim. 3 : 12. Christ assures us that the righteous must expect tribulations and persecutions for the testimony of a good conscience. John 15 : 20; 16 : 1. And the whole Revelation of St. John testifies that Antichrist shall persecute the Church of God till the last coming of the Lord; then the conflict will at last end, and the dragon and false prophets be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone. Do not, therefore, deceive thyself with golden dreams of felicity, but possess thy soul in patience, and strengthen thyself against the approaching calamities.

4. Thirdly, the hope of the restitution of all things, and *the expectation of everlasting happiness*, is another argument to support our patience. For as "the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain" (James 5 : 7), comforting himself under all his toils with the hopes of a plentiful harvest, so should Christians also learn to "possess their souls in patience" (Luke 21 : 19), and to persuade themselves that the great and universal harvest of the long-expected day of the Lord shall repair all our losses, and give to every one of us the fruit of our labors. For as the husbandman by no means reckons his seed lost, though it is for a while buried in the earth, but only sows it there in hopes of a harvest, so when Providence is pleased to take from us our lives, our friends, our estates, or honor, we must not look upon them as lost, but be assured that they are sown in hope of the great day of harvest, when we shall reap abundantly, "if we faint not." Gal. 6 : 9. So also afflictions are compared to seed-time: "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." Ps. 126 : 5, 6.

5. Fourthly, another support of patience is the *coming of Jesus Christ;* when all our sorrows shall be done away, yea, be turned into joy (John 16 : 20), and the just judgment of God shall fall upon our enemies; and then "shall every man have praise of God." 1 Cor. 4 : 5. And this day is at hand: "the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." James 5 : 8. "Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord." Rom. 12 : 19. The time of the cross is short, but the glory that follows it will be eternal. And that day of deliverance cannot be far off.

6. The fifth support of patience is *the truth and faithfulness of God;* by the consideration of which "we ought to stablish our hearts," as St. James says, so that they may not waver. James 5 : 8. For as we tie a tender tree to a post, that it may not be broken by the winds; and as we cast anchor in a storm, to hold the ship, that it may not be driven by the tem-

pest; so ought we to apply our faint and weak hearts to the firm pillar of God's word, and hold the ship of our souls by the anchor of hope, that it sink not. Heb. 6 : 19. For how many and great promises of divine assistance have we in the Holy Scriptures! How many instances of strange deliverances have we daily before our eyes! And what variety of methods has God to deliver us! How many has he preserved in pestilence and famine (2 Kings 6 : 25; 7 : 16), and delivered from the peril of the sword! 2 Chron. 20 : 22; 14 : 12. For God can turn the hearts of enemies to unity and peace, or disappoint the designs of the adversary, as appears in the history of the blessed Jesus: "for," says the angel, "they are dead which sought the young child's life." Matt. 2 : 20. God can also convert an adversary, as he did St. Paul. Acts 9 : 3, etc. How often does he disappoint the bloody intentions of wicked men! Saul had a design upon the life of David, and thought he was so penned in that he could not escape; but God recalls him by the message of a new incursion of the Philistines into his country. 1 Sam. 23 : 27. And the chief priests having sent their officers to lay hold on the blessed Jesus, the latter were so affected by our Lord's discourses, that they could not find in their hearts to touch him. John 7 : 44. Sometimes God smites the enemies of his servants with blindness, as in the cases of Elisha (2 Kings 6 : 18) and of Lot. Gen. 19 : 11. Consider, too, the innumerable legions of angels that guarded the Christians of old time, and miraculously preserved them from imminent dangers, as in the case of St. Peter. Acts 5 : 19; 12 : 7–11. And how often was St. Paul wonderfully preserved, and the designs laid against his life discovered! Acts 23 : 16. At length, by a temporal death, God puts an end to the miseries of his servants.

7. Sixthly, how *glorious* shall the *recompense* of past afflictions be to the faithful in the other world, which they would not exchange for all the pleasures and glories of this! Rom. 8 : 18. "Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted." Matt. 5 : 4. And in Rev. 21 : 4 and Isa. 25 : 8, it is said, that "God shall wipe away all tears from the eyes of" his saints. But how shall he wipe away the tears of those that never sincerely wept?

8. Seventhly, we must set before our eyes *the examples of holy men*, as Abel, Noah, Lot, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, David, Job, and especially the man of God, Moses; who, as the Holy Scripture witnesses, was "very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth." Num. 12 : 3. The people were sometimes murmuring against him, sometimes chiding him, and sometimes threatening to stone him; but he broke their stubborn hearts by his meekness and patience, pacifying them with gentle words, praying to God for them, and entreating rather to be blotted out of the book of life, than that they should be cut off in His displeasure. Exod. 32 : 32. So also Elijah, having been most cruelly persecuted, yet obtained rain from God for his ungrateful country. 1 Kings 18 : 45. Micaiah, before the kings Ahab and Jehoshaphat, was struck by the false prophets, and cast into prison, only for dealing sincerely with the king, and giving him a salutary warning. 1 Kings 22 : 24; 2 Chron. 18 : 23. Why should I mention Isaiah, sawn asunder as a reward for his faithful services, or Jeremiah, bitterly persecuted by his countrymen (Jer. 15 :

10), or Daniel, cast into the den of lions (Dan. 6 : 6), or John the Baptist beheaded (Matt. 14 : 10), or St. Paul, and all the afflictions which he endured (2 Cor. 11 : 23, etc.), or the sufferings and trials of the rest of the Apostles, and all the holy martyrs? See Heb. 11 : 35, etc. Should you inquire of all these, by what way they entered into heaven, they will all with one voice answer: By the way of the cross and tribulation. Acts 14 : 22. Neither did Christ himself enter by any other way. So says St. Peter, "Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously." 1 Pet. 2 : 21, 23. So great was the patience of our blessed Redeemer, that though the sun hid its head at the time of his passion, being unwilling to witness indignities so great; though the earth trembled, and the rocks rent (Luke 23 : 44; Matt. 27 : 51); yet he, still hanging upon the cross, murmured not against his enemies, nor by either word or gesture discovered the least impatience; but on the other hand, prayed for his enemies, that they might be saved by that blood which they so unjustly shed. Now if this be the lot of the children of God, that he chasteneth every one whom he loveth and receiveth, it follows that we must either suffer, or quit our title to be the sons of God. Heb. 12 : 6–8. If our heavenly Father spared not his own Son, though he was without sin, but chastened him with the rod of affliction; canst thou, who art an adopted son, and polluted with innumerable sins, expect to escape it? Moreover, if God bear so patiently with our provocations, how much more patient ought we to be, when we are punished for our good, with a view to our amendment! "Let us rather rejoice," as St. Peter exhorts us (1 Epistle 4 : 13), "inasmuch as we are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that when his glory shall be revealed, we may be glad also with exceeding joy."

9. Eighthly, we shall bear our afflictions patiently, when we consider that Christ Jesus has *sanctified and blessed our crosses by his own*, and has taken away the sting of affliction, and made it to us the instrument of blessing, life, and glory. For as the sufferings of Christ ended in glory, so will the sufferings of every Christian be turned into everlasting joy.

10. Ninthly, behold *the glorious reward* of those that bore their cross *with patience*. Though many of the holy martyrs were most barbarously treated, most inhumanly punished, and cruelly put to death, some thrown to wild beasts, some boiled in oil, others in melted lead; yet there is no man so impious or foolish, as to say, that he had not rather be in their condition now, than that of their murderers. Who would not now prefer the condition of the poor Lazarus, to that of the rich man? Luke 16 : 25. But if thou wouldest obtain the glory of the saints, thou must also bear the same crosses, and bear them with the same patience. To this we must refer those words of our blessed Saviour: "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil of you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven." Matt. 5 : 11, 12. As also those in Rom. 8 : 17, 18, "If we suffer with Christ, we shall also be glorified with him." And again, "I reckon that the sufferings

of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

11. Tenthly, let the deep *compassion* of God be a support to our patience, who can no more forget us, than a mother can forget her sucking child. Isa. 49 : 15. He says, that "his bowels are troubled for Ephraim, and that he will have mercy upon him." Jer. 31 : 20. Hence also he is said to be "faithful, who will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able" (1 Cor. 10 : 13); not chastening us for our hurt, but that we may obtain everlasting life, "and not be condemned with the world." 1 Cor. 11 : 32. For, if the cross be nothing but a token of God's favor, wouldest thou rather choose the pleasures and dainties of the rich man here, and have his punishment hereafter, than enter into eternal life by the way of the cross, and wear a crown of glory?

12. All that has been said on this head, is admirably explained in the Epistle to the Hebrews (Heb. 12 : 1–11) as follows: "Let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith; who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin. And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him. For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons: for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness, unto them which are exercised thereby."

CHAPTER XLV.

DIVINE CONSOLATION PRODUCES PATIENCE UNDER AFFLICTIONS.

Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to them that love him.—James 1 : 12.

EVEN as God has provided healing remedies for the body in external nature; so has he also for the soul in his holy Word. And as in this valley of misery and tears, no man can be perfectly free from crosses, afflictions, and troubles; so nothing can be more seasonable than to collect certain

heads out of the word of God, by a proper application of which we may find help and comfort in the hour of temptation.

2. The *first* comfort is the consideration of the divine providence, which lays the burden upon us. "The Lord killeth, and maketh alive: he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up." 1 Sam. 2:6. "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away." Job 1:21. "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall to the ground without your Father." Matt. 10:29. "I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil." Isa. 45:7. "Happy is the man whom God correcteth; therefore, despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty: for he maketh sore, and bindeth up; he woundeth, and his hands make whole." Job 5:17, 18. It is, therefore, foolish to be angry with those whom God makes the instruments of our correction. "Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins? Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord." Lam. 3:39, 40. This is the design of God, that we should repent and turn from our sins, and not murmur against him that afflicts us.

3. The *second* head of comfort is to consider the end and design of our cross, namely, that God sends it, not out of wrath, but from pure love to our souls. How dangerous it is to a man's soul to be always prosperous and at ease, we may learn not only from the case of "the rich man" (Luke 16:25), but also from the example of our first parents, whose happiness in paradise being greater than they could bear, they were, by the temptations of Satan, seduced from their obedience and dependence upon God. Gen. 3. And every day furnishes us with fresh instances of the danger of such a state. Now, though God, in strict justice, might have condemned man to everlasting punishment, yet he chose rather to have pity on him, and devised means for recovering his lost happiness; and one of these is the cross, or affliction. For this cause he drove him out of paradise, that in the "sweat of his face he should eat bread" (Gen. 3:19), to the intent that, by sufferings, he might be brought to repentance; and this is his constant method even to this day. Though we offend him by innumerable sins, yet, in his abundant mercy, he leaves nothing undone, no means untried, that may lead to our conversion and amendment. And this is the reason why Providence appoints every particular man his cross, that we may all be kept in true penitence and the fear of God unto eternal life. Hence it is that God is said to correct those whom he loves, that they may not be condemned with the world. Prov. 3:11, 12; 13:24; Heb. 12:6; 1 Cor. 11:32.

4. The *third* argument is sin itself, by considering whether thou hast not deserved thy punishments. If thou hast (which thou canst not deny), then it is agreeable to the divine justice that thou shouldest suffer. Now, a temporal suffering, attended with the divine mercy and comfort, is certainly more desirable than an eternal one, without hopes of comfort or expectation of redemption. Call to mind the rich man, in vain crying out: "Father Abraham, have mercy on me" (Luke 16:24), and assure thyself that it will be no small comfort to consider that God has changed the eternal punishment

threatened to our sins into a temporal correction that can be endured.

5. *Fourthly*, when thou art afflicted, consider how much Christ suffered for thy sake! Think upon his poverty, "who had not where to lay his head!" Matt. 8 : 20. Remember the indignities which he underwent, such as no man ever did or will endure: being "despised and rejected of men" (Isa. 53 : 3, 4); yea, "a worm, and no man." Ps. 22 : 6. Moreover, as he took upon him the miseries, pains, and diseases of all the world, hence it was that he underwent such bitter sufferings, such dreadful torments, that even the sun and moon were darkened at the sight, the earth quaked, and the rocks rent; all which, though for the sake of his most cruel enemies, he bore with a love so inexpressibly pure, with a meekness and patience so sincere, that "as a lamb, he opened not his mouth." Moreover, though we provoke him every day by innumerable transgressions, yet he continues, and will still continue faithful, and ready to receive us to his favor upon our repentance (Jer. 3 : 9); yea, and if the ransom he has already paid were not sufficient, he would lay down his life again for our sakes. Therefore, he bears patiently with us, and waits day and night to be gracious. For so strong, so ardent, is his love towards us, that it cannot be quenched by any sins, any ingratitude of ours, if we but sincerely repent of them. His love is higher than heaven, deeper than the sea, and exceeding even our most exalted thoughts and expressions. But there is one thing necessary on our part, and that is, *repentance*. Therefore, he calls upon all without distinction, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Matt. 11 : 28. And, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children together!" Matt. 23 : 37. "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink." John 7 : 37. By these words of Holy Scripture, he continually invites every one to come to him that stands in need of mercy. How then canst thou imagine that He will forsake thee in the time of trouble, who endured so many and great miseries for thy sake! It is for this that God calls himself our *Father*. Now we know that a father is more compassionate and tender than a master: so that he would not have us dread him, but love him as a dutiful child does an indulgent father. When, therefore, any affliction befalls thee, receive it cheerfully, and remember that thy Father sends it to thee for good, and kiss the rod, and the hand that holds it. Consider the compassion of God as thy greatest security, the firm foundation of all thy hopes; firmly believing that thy heavenly Father will lay no more upon thee than he knows to be absolutely necessary for the salvation of thy soul.

6. *Fifthly*, we must call to mind the consolatory promise of our blessed Saviour, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, that ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice; and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy." John 16 : 20. As a little seed is multiplied into a number of grains, so one affliction shall produce a large increase of spiritual joy and glory. "They that sow in tears, shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." Ps. 126 : 5, 6. If God should promise to convert every pebble about thy house into a precious stone, thou wouldest quickly make a

large collection, and highly value them. The case of crosses and afflictions is just the same. Learn to love them, yea, court them, knowing that God will assuredly convert them into treasures of blessings, and spiritual joys; according to the words: "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time, are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." Rom. 8 : 18.

7. The *sixth* ground of comfort is found in the examples of the saints, none of whom were without their cross. Ask them one by one, and they will answer you, "Through much tribulation we entered into the kingdom of God." Acts 14 : 22. Ask the elders in the Revelation, "Who are these?" and they will tell you, "These are they which came out of great tribulation." Rev. 7 : 14. Inquire of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Aaron, David, Daniel, Elias, Job, and all the Prophets and Apostles; they will tell you that they drank deep of the bitter cup of affliction, which was to them "the cup of salvation." Ps. 116 : 13. If we consider only the holy martyrs, whose tortures and sufferings were terrible and affrighting, we shall find that nothing could seduce them from Christ. And what comparison is there between their crosses and our light afflictions, who "have not yet resisted unto blood"! Heb. 12 : 4. We cannot bear a trivial injury, or an affronting expression for Christ's sake, for whom the blessed martyrs underwent the most ignominious deaths. One was beheaded, another roasted alive, a third crucified; some were drowned, some stoned, others hanged, others struck through with darts, others forced to walk barefooted upon red-hot plates of iron; the love of Christ so swallowing up all sense of pain, that they cried out that "they were walking upon roses."

8. The *seventh* source of comfort is, the presence of God with us under the cross. God has nowhere declared that He dwells with the merry, but rather with the afflicted and sorrowful. "I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." Isa. 57 : 15. "Fear thou not; for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.—When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." Isa. 41 : 10; 43 : 2. "Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name." Ps. 91 : 14. "The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart, and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit." Ps. 34 : 18. It was the comforting presence of God that enabled the holy martyrs to bear up so boldly under the torments that were laid upon them, and to disregard their tormentors, as did particularly St. Laurence and St. Vincent, the latter of whom, walking upon burning coals, told them, "he was walking upon fragrant roses." Babylas, the martyr, desired that the chain with which he was bound might be buried with him, that he might not be deprived of so great an ornament. Ignatius wished to be a grain of wheat, and to be ground with the teeth of wild beasts, that he might become clean

bread unto his Saviour. These are such instances of courage and joyfulness as utterly exceed the powers of nature, and are only owing to the influences of that heavenly Comforter who supported St. Stephen, and made his face shine before the council as it had been the face of an angel. Acts 6 : 15. And in this sense is that saying of the Psalmist verified, "Thy comforts delight my soul." Ps. 94 : 19.

CHAPTER XLVI.

MOTIVES TO PATIENCE; AND, THE BENEFITS OF THE CROSS.

Be patient, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.—James 5 : 7.

PATIENCE is that virtue by which we behave ourselves quietly before God under any cross or tribulation, committing ourselves and all our concerns, whether temporal or eternal, without any reserve, to be governed and disposed of by the all-wise providence of God, entirely resigning all to his will: to the practice of which the following arguments strongly persuade us.

2. *First*, because every cross and calamity of life, as sword, famine, pestilence, and other punishments, proceed from God. Nothing happens in this world at random or by chance, though, by the permission of Providence, many evils are inflicted on us by the devil and his instruments. For thus saith the Lord: "I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil; I the Lord do all these things." Isa. 45 : 7. And "The Lord killeth, and maketh alive; he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up." 1 Sam. 2 : 6. What canst thou reply to all this? Wilt thou be impatient, and fight against God?

3. *Secondly*, we must remember that our punishments are less than we deserve. Our sins are always greater than our punishments, and our sufferings less than our offences. Thou canst not but own that the mercies thou hast enjoyed, from thy youth up unto this day, are more and greater than the punishments thou hast suffered. Why then shouldest thou not, with profound submission, receive cheerfully the corrections which he inflicts for thy benefit, to save thee from destruction?

4. *Thirdly*, if we have in many ways provoked God, and deserved punishment, we must acknowledge with the prophet Daniel, that he is righteous in all that is brought upon us. Dan. 9 : 7. Is it unreasonable that God should punish thy sins, either in this world or the next? And if this be allowed, why dost thou not submit to the divine chastisements without murmuring or repining? For it is better to be punished now than hereafter, as St. Paul tells us: "When we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned

with the world." 1 Cor. 11:32. Whosoever, therefore, is impatient, and murmurs against God, accuses him of injustice, and calls his righteousness in question; and yet "the Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works." Ps. 145:17. "Righteous art thou, O Lord, and upright are thy judgments." Ps. 119:137.

5. *Fourthly*, doth it not discover a stubborn and untractable temper, to fly in the face of God, who has so long borne with, and still continues to bear with thee patiently, as St. Paul says, speaking of the goodness, patience, and long-suffering of God, by which he endeavors to draw us to repentance? See Rom. 2:4; 9:23; 11:33.

6. *Fifthly*, set before thine eyes the patience of thy Saviour. He who was spotless innocence and purity itself, though he could have destroyed his enemies in a moment, yet bore their utmost cruelties with patience, and prayed for his enemies. How much more reason then have we to be patient, who have deserved the greatest punishment, even eternal punishment. As Jacob served seven years for Rachel (Gen. 29:18), so Christ, for our sakes, submitted to the greatest miseries of life, for three and thirty years. And should we refuse to suffer a short affliction for his sake? Consider the patience of all the saints, as Joseph, and Moses, who offered to lay down his life for his people. Exod. 32:32. So David says, "If I shall find favor in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again, and show me both it (the ark) and his habitation; but if he thus say, I have no delight in thee; behold here am I, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him." 2 Sam. 15:25. Consider also the cases of Job, and the holy Apostles and Martyrs.

7. *Sixthly*, the remembrance of God's great mercies should move us to patience. For, first of all, thou art assured, that by Christ thou art reconciled unto God, and that therefore no man can rob thee of this transcendent mercy, though the whole world should league together against thee: "for the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him." Ps. 103:17. What then can separate us from the love of God? Rom. 8:38, 39. Moreover, thou art redeemed by Christ unto everlasting life; a privilege which no creature can take from thee. Now, if the case be so, that the love of God and thy eternal salvation are firmly secured to thee; it will surely be easy for thee to despise the threats and assaults of external enemies and persecutors, and, like the blessed martyrs of old, to be wholly regardless of what man can do unto thee.

8. The *seventh* support of patience is found in the truth and promise of God. "Therefore will the Lord wait, that he may be gracious unto you; and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy on you: for the Lord is a God of judgment: blessed are all they that wait for him." Isa. 30:18. See also Ps. 25:3; Lam. 3:25. "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life." Jam. 1:12.

9. *Eighthly*, we ought to submit to anything for the sake of the glory of God. Thus the three men in the fiery furnace (Dan. 3:16, etc.); Daniel in the lions' den; Joseph in prison; David in banishment; all gave glory to God by their patient suffering.

10. *Ninthly*, for the sake of our own advantage. For, first, we learn many great and useful lessons under the discipline of the cross. "Patience work-

eth experience" (Rom. 5 : 4), saith St. Paul. Secondly, patience breaks the violence of our sufferings; upon which account our blessed Lord promises *rest* to those that bear his yoke. Matt. 11 : 29. On the other hand, impatience disquiets the soul, adds grief to our trouble, and a sting to our wounds, and sometimes casts us into destruction both of body and soul; an instance of which we have in the Israelites, who, being impatient, and murmuring against God, were destroyed by fiery serpents in the wilderness. Num. 21 : 6.

11. *Tenth*, great is the reward of patience. So Job, having been despoiled of all his goods, was rewarded with a double portion. Job 42 : 10. For, "Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth." Matt. 5 : 5. And, by consequence, cursed are the impatient, for they shall be disinherited.

12. *Eleventh*, patience is a virtue of unspeakable advantage to all orders of men. In the Church it is a virtue which enables men to bear the opposition, contempt, and persecution to which they may be exposed by the conscientious discharge of their duty. In the State it is a useful virtue, enabling men to bear with patience the odium and reproach that generally attends public stations. For history informs us, that impatience, and a desire of revenge, have been the ruin of many flourishing states and kingdoms. As to the concerns of private families, how necessary patience is *there*, may be learned from every one's experience, particularly from those that have entered into the marriage-state; in which respect, these words of Solomon are applicable, "He that is slow to anger, is better than the mighty." Prov. 16 : 32.

13. *Twelfth*, consider that Christ has taken out the sting of our afflictions, so that they cannot hurt us with regard to our eternal happiness; for by his cross and passion he has made an atonement for our sins, and has taken away those punishments that were due to them. If then our cross be sanctified by the cross of Christ, and is to us a remedy against all our spiritual diseases, it follows that the cross itself is a help to salvation; which made the Apostle say, "All things work together for good to them that love God." Rom. 8 : 28.

14. *Lastly*, consider how light thy afflictions are when compared with "the glory that shall be revealed in us." Rom. 8 : 18. Upon which account the love of God is still more illustrious, in that he is pleased to afflict us in this world. For the duration of a temporal affliction, if compared to eternity, is but for a moment; on the other hand, the joy that it produces lasts to eternity. Hence we ought to wish and pray for afflictions in this world, that we may have rest in the other. Therefore, St. Peter says: "Though now for a season ye are in heaviness;—yet ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." 1 Pet. 1 : 6, 8.

THE BENEFITS OF THE CROSS.

15. The cross is the strait and narrow way leading to life,—a rod of divine correction, to awaken us from the sleep of sin and death,—the morning star that ushers in the sun of consolation,—a token of divine favor, like the rainbow. It brings us to a conformity with Christ,—strips us of the armor of darkness, and clothes us with the armor of light. It is a plant of life,—a cup of salvation,—a trial of faith,—the edification of our neighbor —the parent of love,—a companion of

hope,—a forerunner of grace,—a medicine of the soul,—a preservative against sin,—a destroyer of the carnal life,—a cherisher of the spiritual life,—a change of the earthly mind,—a forsaking of the world,—an increase of heavenly gifts,—a conqueror of pride,—a nurse of humility,—a teacher of patience,—a renewer of the spirit,—a strengthener of virtue,—a discipline of the body,—an enlivener of the mind,—a parent of wisdom,—a teacher of meekness,—an encourager of prayer,—a mistress of patience,—a guardian of chastity,—the peace of the conscience,—a source of inward joys—a glittering jewel of the faithful,—the crown of the martyrs,—the glory of the elect.

CHAPTER XLVII.

SENTENCES, AND EXAMPLES OF PATIENCE AND CONSOLATION.

We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.—ACTS 14 : 22.

AS the life of a Christian consists of crosses and afflictions, through which he must enter into the kingdom of God; so he must arm himself with patience, and beg it earnestly of God. We must not think that we are born for pastime and diversion, but for many afflictions and trials of patience. And here we will consider three several arguments. The first shall contain some select sentences and testimonies of Scripture. The second, examples. And the third, encouragements.

I. SOME SENTENCES AND TESTIMONIES OF SCRIPTURE.

2. Patience submits itself with meekness, quietness, and humility, to the cross; receiving all kinds of afflictions, calamities, and persecutions, whether bodily or spiritual, as the cross and yoke of Christ. By this we follow our blessed Saviour, not murmuring against God, but acknowledging in faith, that God is reconciled to us through Christ, and comforting ourselves under the severest trials, with the hopes of deliverance. This is also called *meekness* towards them that injure and persecute us, leaving the avenging of our quarrel to God; not upon a principle of reason or worldly policy, but arising from the grace of God, as the fruit and effect of true faith.

3. The parts of this description are —1. Obedience. 2. Imitation. 3. Not to murmur. 4. To consider God as reconciled to us through Christ. 5. To lessen our afflictions by hope. 6. To behave ourselves with meekness towards our persecutors. 7. Not to exercise revenge. And so it contains in it faith, hope, charity, humility, meekness, and obedience.

4. These virtues are to be practised and exercised by all the disciples of Christ, who are purchased for heaven and eternal life: for against such the devil, that great dragon and old serpent (Rev. 12 : 7–9), yea, and the

whole world, are fighting continually. Hence it is said, "The dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." Rev. 12 : 17. To this also may be referred the following: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life, shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for my sake, shall find it" (Matt. 16 : 24, 25): that is, Whosoever shall refuse to bear the cross for Christ's sake, and shall flee from it, shall lose his soul.

5. "Ye shall be hated of all men, for my name's sake." Mark 13 : 13. This is indeed a heavy cross, to be hated of all men; but as it is for Christ's sake, this affords great consolation.

6. Concerning religious persecutions, our blessed Saviour prophesies, "They shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake.—In your patience possess ye your souls." Luke 21 : 12, 19.

7. "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." John 15 : 18, 19, 20.

8. "They shall put you out of the synagogues; yea, the time cometh that whosoever killeth you, will think that he doeth God service." John 16 : 2.

9. When St. Paul had been stoned at Lystra, but encouraged by the discourses of the disciples, "he confirmed the souls of the disciples,—exhorting them to continue in the faith : and that we must, through much tribulation, enter into the kingdom of God." Acts 14 : 22.

10. "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body." 2 Cor. 4 : 8.

11. "Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. If a man strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully. If we suffer, we shall also reign with him." 2 Tim. 2 : 3, 5, 12. "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution." 2 Tim. 3 : 12.

12. "Ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise." Heb. 10 : 36.

13. "Let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For, consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds." Heb. 12 : 1–3.

14. "Now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations; that the trial of your faith might be found much more precious than of gold that perisheth." 1 Peter 1 : 6, 7.

15. "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." Rev. 3 : 10. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." Rev. 2 : 10.

II. EXAMPLES OF PATIENCE.

16. Abraham suffered many things from the Chaldeans, Canaanites, and Egyptians. "Then came he out of the land of the Chaldeans, and dwelt in Charran. And he gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on. And God spake on this wise, That his seed should sojourn in a strange land; and that they should bring them into bondage, and entreat them evil four hundred years." Acts 7 : 4–6. "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles. For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." Heb. 11 : 8, 9. "He delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked. The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished." 2 Peter 2 : 7, 9. Isaac refused not to be offered up for a burnt sacrifice. Gen. 22 : 9. Jacob also had a great share of suffering. He fled from his brother Esau, passing over Jordan with his staff. Gen. 32 : 10. "By his strength he had power with God; yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed; he wept and made supplication unto him." Hosea 12 : 3, 4. He saith unto Pharaoh, "The days of the years of my pilgrimage are a hundred and thirty years; few and evil." Gen. 47 : 9. "Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord." Jam. 5 : 11. Moses was meek, and afflicted above all the men that were upon the face of the earth. Numb. 12 : 3. He "chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." Heb. 11 : 25. How many afflictions did David suffer, who was a type of Christ! "O Lord my God, in thee do I put my trust; save me from all them that persecute me, and deliver me." Ps. 7 : 1. "Lord, thou hast heard the desire of the humble." Ps. 10 : 17. Solomon's motto was, "The fear of the Lord is the instruction of wisdom; and before (the) honor (that is, of the next world) is humility." Prov. 15 : 33. What patience had not the three men in the fiery furnace (Dan. 3 : 21), and the holy Apostles and Martyrs! The patience of Christ exceeds all these examples. 1. Because he was most obedient upon the cross. 2. Because he murmured not against God. 3. Because he held fast his confidence in God, and called him his God, though forsaken by him. Matt. 27 : 46. 4. Because he heartily prayed for his enemies; and revenged not himself when it was in his power.

III. CONSOLATIONS.

17. "Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted." Matt. 5 : 4. "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Matt. 11 : 28–30. In these words there is a fivefold consolation. 1. That the afflicted may come to Christ. 2. May be refreshed. 3. May take up his yoke. 4. May find rest unto their souls. 5. That his yoke is easy. For when it is borne for Christ's sake, it is not burdensome, but refreshing. Hence St. Paul saith, "We glory in tribulations; knowing that tribulation work-

eth patience, and patience, experience, and experience, hope, and hope maketh not ashamed: because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost." Rom. 5 : 3, 4, 5. "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him." James 1 : 12. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?"—"All things work together for good to them that love God." Rom. 8 : 35, 28. "In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." John 16 : 23. "I have fought a good fight." 2 Tim. 4 : 7.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

THERE IS NO AFFLICTION FOR WHICH GOD HAS NOT PROVIDED APPROPRIATE CONSOLATION. THE CONSOLATION WHICH HE AFFORDS IS ALWAYS GREATER THAN OUR MISERY; THIS CONSIDERATION SHOULD SUSTAIN AND CONFIRM OUR PATIENCE.

THE holy Apostle St. Paul, when meditating upon the tender mercies and compassions of our Heavenly Father to all afflicted and contrite sinners, breaks out into these words, full of the praise of God: "*Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ—knowing that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation.*" 2 Cor. 1 : 3–7.

2. In these words, so full of grace, the holy Apostle gives thanks to God for heavenly consolation; which is indeed the only remedy against all the troubles and adversities that oppress us in this life; teaching, at the same time, that no adversity befalls us, how great soever, but God supports us under it by his divine comfort, which is more abundant than our sufferings. This he confirms by seven weighty arguments, which he repeats in regular order.

3. The first is, because God is the *Father of mercies*, which is the most cheering appellation that can be conceived: for he shows himself a Father, not only in name, but in sincerity and truth to all afflicted souls. Consider what are the properties of a father; for they all belong to God our Heavenly Father. It is the part of a father, 1. To love his children. 2. To take care of them. 3. To feed them. 4. To defend them. 5. To correct and instruct them. 6. To pity their infirmities. 7. To be tender of them. 8. To give them an inheritance. If a man will but thoroughly consider these particulars, he must acknowledge that the very name of a *father* carries in it such a treasure of comfort, as abundantly outweighs all the miseries of human life. And to illustrate this

yet more perfectly, St. Paul, by a most significant epithet, calls him, *the Father of mercies;* that is, the eternal fountain of all that tenderness and affection that is diffused through the hearts of so many thousands of fathers. Hence it follows, that no cross can befall the children of God so great, as is the comfort that arises from the Father of mercies.

4. The second argument is contained in this expression, *the God of all comfort;* that is, he overflows with eternal and infinite comforts. For as God is the eternal, infinite, and chief Good; and on the other hand, our crosses are finite and temporal; what can proceed from that eternal and chief Good, but perpetual comfort, not only equal, but superior to our greatest affliction? For as our miseries are finite, and the consolations of God are infinite, it clearly follows that the latter must be superior to the former.

5. The third argument is, the example of St. Paul, and all the saints. "God," saith he, "comforteth us in all our tribulation." If we but read the histories of holy men of former times, and compare their trials and afflictions with the divine consolations wherewith they were supported under them, we shall easily perceive that our afflictions are but light in comparison with their torments; and that no cross can befall us so great, as to exceed those divine comforts and supports which the holy martyrs enjoyed. Who will presume to compare his crosses with those of Job? Who can say he has been afflicted like Jeremiah (Jer. 20: 7, etc.)? or tried like David? Ps. 88. And what is our cross compared with that of Christ? or are our sufferings, compared with the torments of the holy martyrs? Their examples, as they were the children of God, our Heavenly Father has set before our eyes, to teach us, 1. That the cross is the sanctuary of the true Christian. 2. His heavenly and spiritual glory. 3. His victory over the world and the devil. 4. His preparation for the kingdom of heaven. 5. That without the cross no man can enter into the kingdom of God. 6. That the cross is the image of Christ. 7. That it is an exalted and sublime mystery, in which lies hid the highest wisdom of God. But flesh and blood cannot comprehend this, neither taste the heavenly manna hidden in the word of God, except by the cross. Hence, the divine comforts are greater than any human sufferings.

6. The fourth is expressed in these words, "That we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God." Now, how did God comfort the apostles? And how do they comfort us again? Certainly, by the gracious promises in his holy Word. Hence it is said, "Whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope." Rom. 15: 4. Now, whosoever reads the Word of God as he ought, must needs observe how kindly God vouchsafes to treat with us, what abundance of grace, what spiritual and eternal blessings he promises to bestow upon us; so that we must needs confess that such comfort outweighs all the sufferings of human life. For though it is said of this troublesome world, "that all the sons of Adam, from the day of their birth, find it full of trouble and unquietness, fear, anger, and strife;" yet, if to this state of trouble and misery we oppose the glories of the eternal king-

dom (2 Cor. 4 : 17), it will appear that the joys of the next life, promised in the Word of God, are vastly superior to the miseries of this. It is, indeed, true, that sin is a very great and dreadful evil, daily encompassing us about, and involving us in innumerable miseries. Yet, if we but call to mind that Christ is our righteousness, it will thence follow that the burden of sin which lies upon us is much less than our spiritual consolation which is in Christ Jesus. For greater is the righteousness which is in Christ than the sin which is in us. In short, the Word of God so abounds and overflows with heavenly consolations, that the heart of man is too narrow to receive them. It is like the poor widow's pot of oil (2 Kings 4 : 6), which, by the blessing of Elisha, produced more oil than there were vessels to receive. Yea, it often happens that a word of Holy Scripture can comfort a man more than the whole world, yea, than the devil himself can distress him. "The river of God is full of water," saith David (Ps. 65 : 9), so full that no man can empty it. Therefore, God calls himself "The fountain of living waters." Jer. 2 : 13. And so in Ps. 36 : 9, "With thee is the fountain of life; in thy light shall we see light." Who, then, can think that the fountain of sin and death more abounds with affliction than the fountain of life with comforts?

7. The fifth ground of comfort is that the apostle calls the cross of the faithful, "the sufferings of Christ." And that 1. Because all the faithful are the spiritual members of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, as the head feels all the pains of every member of the body, by a certain sympathy arising from its union with them; so Christ, who is our Head, feels all the crosses and sufferings of every member. 2. Because Christ dwells in his faithful servants, and is vitally united to them; therefore, also, he suffers in his members, sharing in all their sufferings, banishments, and persecutions, as he witnessed by a voice from heaven, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" Acts 9 : 4. 3. Because we are born anew of Christ, and he is our "everlasting Father." Isa. 9 : 6. Now we know, that the heart of a father has a very tender sense of the sufferings of his child. Therefore, the sufferings of all believers are the sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ. And if it be so, canst thou think any affliction so great that it cannot be made easy and tolerable by this consideration, that Christ is thy Head, and thou art his member; that he is united to thee, dwells in thee, and suffers in thee, regarding all thy sufferings as his own; that he is thy Father, and feels in himself all the crosses, pains, and afflictions that are laid upon thee?

8. The sixth ground of consolation, the Apostle deduces from Jesus Christ, the spring and foundation of all comfort, in these words: "Our consolation aboundeth by Christ." As sin is the fountain of all misery; so is Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the spring and fountain of all joy and comfort. Now as the power of Christ is greater than the power of sin; so is the comfort that proceedeth from him greater and more powerful than any misery that can arise from sin; according to the words of St. Paul, "Where sin abounded grace did much more abound." Rom. 5 : 20. "For it pleased the Father, that in Christ should all fulness dwell." Col. 1 : 19. Him, therefore, the prophet Isaiah (Isa. 61 : 1) describes as sent from God to comfort all that mourn. Whence it follows, that the comforts

flowing from Christ, are greater than any crosses and sorrows which we endure.

9. The seventh comfort which the Apostle mentions, is the glory of Christ: hence he says, "As ye are partakers of his sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation." This glory we know to be so great, that he is glorious, not only with respect to his own Person, in a manner incommunicable to his body, which is the Church; but also that he, as the Head of the Church, was exalted to glory for that very end, that all the members of his body might be partakers with him. Hence St. Paul calls him, "The head of the church which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." Ephes. 1 : 22, 23. And now, what calamity, what cross, what affliction can be so bitter, as not to be sweetened by the consolation arising from such future glory? Wherefore St. Paul does not "reckon the sufferings of this present time to be worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us." Rom. 8 : 18.

10. It now remains that we speak of the five means, by which we may be partakers of these comforts.

11. The first is, *true repentance and knowledge of sin*. Without this, the soul is not capable of comfort; according to that saying of Christ, "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick." Matt. 9 : 12. On the other hand, a soul that has a true sense of sin, understands that sin has cast it into so many miseries and calamities, and therefore murmurs not against God, but abhors itself and its own iniquities (Lam. 3 : 39); and confesses that God is just in all that he has brought upon it. For as sin, like a general contagion, has infected the whole mass of mankind; so also the sentence of misery and affliction in this moral state, has passed upon all, for that all have sinned. And whoever, like the prophet Daniel (Dan. 9 : 7, 16), confesses his sin, shall find consolation descending upon him from heaven like an angel, as in the case of Daniel, ch. 9 : 21.

12. The second means, is *faith*, which hangs upon Jesus Christ, as the infant upon the mother's bosom. It rests entirely in the paternal affection of the God of all consolation. It holds fast by Jesus Christ, as Jacob did by the angel, saying, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." Gen. 32 : 26. It is faith which in Christ Jesus overcometh sin, death, the world, the devil, and all misery. For "all things are possible to him that believeth." Mark 9 : 23. And he that believeth shall see the glory of God. John 11 : 40.

13. The third means, is *prayer*, which is a conversation with God. As it is a relief and a refreshment to an afflicted soul, to communicate its sorrows and troubles to a faithful friend: so are our hearts refreshed and comforted, by conversing with God in prayer. "When I cried, thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul." Psalm 138: 3. Prayer offered up in the name of Jesus Christ, is like Jacob's ladder (Gen. 28 : 12), on which the soul ascends from earth to heaven; as soon as the prayer ascends, an angel, that is, divine consolation, descends upon it. Thus it was in the agony of our blessed Lord; for when he prayed more earnestly, lo! an angel descended from heaven to strengthen him. Luke 22 : 43. And we may assure ourselves, that whensoever we pray according to His will, we shall be strengthened according to His promise.

14. The fourth means of obtaining

divine consolation is, *praising God*, which is always attended with comfort and spiritual joy. He that is daily employed in the praises of God, lives the life of an angel; for they, we know, continually "behold the face of the Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 18: 10), and sing his praises. This is their highest joy, this is the bread of angels. Whence it appears, that praising and glorifying God must afford the most exalted joy and comfort to a devout soul. Hence David says, "I will bless the Lord at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul shall make her boast in the Lord; the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad." Psalm 34: 1, 2. In this place David joins the praise of God and spiritual joy together; teaching us thereby, that the one is the fruit of the other, because they are most intimately connected.

15. The last sure and certain means of receiving divine consolation, is a diligent reading, hearing, and meditating on the Word of God. "For whatsoever things were written, were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." Rom. 15: 4.

16. From the Word of God as the true fountain of consolation, are to be drawn all the above-mentioned arguments and grounds of comfort; namely, joy and quiet of mind under all kinds of crosses and afflictions. Hence also we must learn how these comforts are to be obtained, namely, by true repentance, a living faith, ardent prayer, and continually praising God.

CHAPTER XLIX.

THE TRUTH OF GOD AND THE CERTAINTY OF HIS PROMISES, OUGHT TO DISPOSE US TO PATIENCE.

I will look unto the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation; my God will hear me. Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me. I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him, until he plead my cause, and execute judgment for me: he will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness. Then she that is mine enemy shall see it, and shame shall cover her which said unto me, Where is the Lord thy God?—Micah 7: 7–10.

We read in the prophet Jeremiah (chap. 9: 4, etc.), that before the Babylonish captivity and the destruction of the temple, besides the idolatry that brought that desolation upon them, treachery, lying, falsehood, hatred, and envy prevailed to a high degree; and that charity was quite cold and dead amongst them. For wheresoever these abominations prevail, there, it is plain, God is not; and that he has forsaken not only the city or the kingdom, but also the hearts of those that dwell there; and when God forsakes us, destruction quickly finds us. So says the prophet (Jer. 9: 4–8): "Take ye heed every one of his neighbor, and trust ye not in any brother: for every brother will utterly supplant, and every neighbor will walk with slanders. They weary themselves to commit iniquity. Their

tongue is as an arrow shot out, it speaketh deceit; one speaketh peaceably to his neighbor with his mouth, but in heart he layeth his wait."

2. Here we may see the wretched state of Jerusalem, and what flagrant iniquities they were which hastened its ruin. Treachery and iniquity did so abound, that there was neither truth nor honesty left among the people. Their only aim was to cheat and defraud one another; and their hearts being thus set upon iniquity, they brought on themselves ruin and destruction.

3. Something similar to this, is the complaint of the prophet Micah: "Woe is me! for I am as when they have gathered the summer fruits, as the grape gleanings of the vintage; there is no cluster to eat; my soul desired the first ripe fruit. The good man is perished out of the earth; and there is none upright among men: they all lie in wait for blood. They do evil with both hands earnestly. Trust ye not in a friend." Micah 7: 1, 2, 3, 5. When a people or nation are come to this pass, they are industriously digging a pit, into which they design to rush boldly, and with their eyes open. Would to God this were not the case in our own times! We, too, deeply share in their guilt, and we must expect to share in their punishments. For our destruction is of ourselves. O that we could at last awake, renounce our past errors, put off our carnal minds that are at enmity against God, and love the truth and peace. If we do not so, we are condemned already, and cannot receive help.

4. But in order that upright and good men may not be too much discouraged in this sad and dangerous state of things, we must consider by what means the holy men of old supported themselves in such a state of universal corruption. The prophet Micah (Micah 7: 7, etc.), pointing out, as it were, with his finger the fountain of true consolation, says, "Therefore I will look unto the Lord: I will wait for the God of my salvation!" That is his first comfort. The second is, "My God will hear me." The third is, "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy. When I fall, I shall arise." The fourth is, "When I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me." The fifth is, "I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him, until he plead my cause, and execute judgment for me." The sixth is, "He will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness." The seventh is, "Then she that is mine enemy shall see it, and shame shall cover her."

5. First, he says, "I will look unto the Lord: I will wait for the God of my salvation." In these words is contained the doctrine of faith and hope, which are, as it were, the two watchful, never-sleeping eyes of the soul, by which it constantly looks towards God in the greatest dangers and necessities; the greater the calamity, the stronger ought to be our faith, the more vigorous our hope. Then it is that we should call to mind the words which we repeat at the beginning of the Apostles' Creed: "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth;" that is, I believe that there is no misery or calamity so great, but God can and will deliver me out of it. Let us learn, therefore, to turn away our eyes from temporal suffering, not regarding it, but God "who worketh salvation in the midst of the earth" (Ps. 74: 12), and who alone

can and will deliver us according to Psalm 123: "Unto thee lift I up mine eyes, O thou that dwellest in the heavens. Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until that he have mercy upon us. Have mercy upon us, O Lord, have mercy upon us; for we are exceedingly filled with contempt. Our soul is exceedingly filled with the scorning of those that are at ease, and with the contempt of the proud."

6. Moreover, as it is the way of God to help us, not at the time appointed by us, but in his own due time; so it is not enough for us to say, "I will look unto the Lord;" but we must add, "and wait for the God of my salvation." For faith, hope, and patience, have an entire relation to, and mutual dependence upon each other; as we may see in Psalm 27; in the beginning of which, David, looking up to God, says, "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?" He concludes his prayer with these words: "I believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord." Ps. 27: 1, 14. So Psalm 130: 5, 6: "I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait; and in his word do I hope. My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning." "For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry." Habak. 2: 3. But if the sorrowing soul shall say: "Alas, I have waited a great while!" let her know that it is necessary it should be so, in order that her faith, hope, and patience, may be tried and approved in the sight of God. We never please God more, than when with patience and humility we wait for the accomplishment of his promises, and receive with submission all his determinations concerning us.—Everything has a certain beginning; so has everything an appointed end; and whosoever does not wait for that, labors in vain. As the grain is exposed to all the vicissitudes of wind and weather, before it comes to maturity, and, whenever it becomes ripe, is the sweeter and better upon that account: so is it with the cross. He that bears it with patience, and waits for the end of it, shall reap "the peaceable fruit of righteousness." Heb. 12: 11. For St. Paul affirms, "that hope maketh not ashamed" (Rom. 5: 5); for when it is founded upon divine grace, as upon a firm rock, it continues immovable in adversity. Hence it is said, "Let none that wait on thee be ashamed." Psalm 25: 3. "They looked unto him and were lightened; and their faces were not ashamed." Ps. 34: 5. "In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust; let me never be ashamed." Ps. 31: 1. "The expectation of the poor shall not perish forever." Ps. 9: 18.

7. The second consolation is, that God will certainly hear our prayers: "The Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping. The Lord hath heard my supplication; the Lord will receive my prayer." Ps. 6: 8, 9. "In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried unto my God: he heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry came before him, even into his ears." Ps. 18: 6. "This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles. The eyes of the Lord are

upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry." Ps. 34 : 6, 15. "Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name. He shall call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honor him." Ps. 91 : 14, 15. "O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come. By terrible things in righteousness wilt thou answer us, O God of our salvation; who art the confidence of all the ends of the earth, and of them that are afar off upon the sea." Ps. 65 : 2, 5. But if thou shalt say in thine heart, "All these were men eminent for holiness, faith, and dependence upon God; but as for me, I am not worthy to be compared with them," I answer, out of Rom. 3 : 23—"All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;" but are heard and accepted through grace, by repentance and faith. "The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth. He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him; he also will hear their cry, and will save them." Ps. 145 : 18, 19. "He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer. This shall be written for the generations to come." Ps. 102 : 17, 18.

8. The third consolation is contained in these words: "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy! when I fall, I shall arise." Though the world, according to the perverse spirit that governs it, rejoice at the sufferings of good men (John 16 : 20), yet shall they at last be confounded, and the righteous be comforted. Hence we are told, "The Lord will not cast off forever: but though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion, according to the multitude of his mercies. For he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men." Lam. 3 : 31, 32, 33. "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." 1 Cor. 10 : 13. The same God that laid the burden on you, will in due time take it off, comfort you, and deliver you from death. "Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing; thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness." Ps. 30 : 11. "The Lord upholdeth all that fall; and raiseth up all those that be bowed down." Psalm 145 : 14. "In a little wrath, I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer." Isa. 54 : 8. "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning." Lam. 3 : 22, 23.

9. The fourth consolation is contained in these words: "When I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me." By *darkness*, he means a state of affliction; which is darkness, indeed, wherein a man can neither see nor be seen by his friends with the least glimpse of worldly comfort. The sufferer sits in the very region of shame and sorrow, the valley of the shadow of death, exposed to the violence and assaults of evil spirits and wicked men. But dark and dismal as it is, the Lord himself will enlighten it; the light of whose countenance shines most of all in the dismal darkness of worldly affliction. There he appears to comfort the disconsolate, and cheer, with the brightness of his presence, the desolate and desponding soul. Thus it is said, "Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart."

Ps. 97 : 11. "Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness; he is gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous." Ps. 112 : 4.

10. The fifth consolation is this: "I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him, until he plead my cause, and execute judgment for me." Let the afflicted person think on this, and remember that though from those that afflict him he may have deserved better usage; yet from the hand of God, he has deserved a great deal worse. Whatever befalls us, is by the permission of God. Upon this account, the evils that we suffer from wicked men, are called in this verse, "the indignation of the Lord." Blessed is he that beareth this affliction with patience, and receiveth it no otherwise than as coming from God himself. "Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him out of thy law; that thou mayest give him rest from the days of adversity, until the pit be digged for the wicked." Ps. 94 : 12, 13. "It is good for a man that he sit alone and keep silence, because he hath borne the yoke upon him. He putteth his mouth in the dust, if so be there may be hope. He giveth his cheek to him that smiteth him; he is filled full with reproach." Lam. 3 : 27–30. This was truly the case of David, who might properly say, "I will bear the anger of the Lord, because I have sinned against him." For thus he speaks, when he commanded Zadok to carry back the ark of God. "If I shall find favor in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again, and show me both it and his habitation. But if he thus say, I have no delight in thee; behold here am I, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him." 2 Sam. 15 : 25, 26. And when Shimei cursed him, he humbly acknowledges the appointment and permission of God, saying, "Let him alone, and let him curse; for the Lord hath bidden him." 2 Sam. 16 : 11. "Fret not (therefore) thyself because of evildoers. Put thy trust in God." Psalm 37 : 1, 5.

11. The sixth consolation is, "He will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness." This is a figure of speech taken from the condition of a man that has long lain in darkness, and been as a dead man out of mind; or of one taken out of a dark and deep prison into the light and open air. For as these, having been long confined to darkness and misery, are exceedingly refreshed with the cheerful light of the sun and the splendor of the heavens; so after the patient bearing of the cross, the light of God's countenance breaks forth, and the beams of divine consolation strike powerfully upon the soul, filling it with glory and joy unspeakable. Ps. 50 : 2. Did not Joseph thus break through the shades of darkness and misery, like the bright sun out of a cloud? Gen. 41 : 38. And did not God bring king David out of the region of misery into a state of joy and happiness? So also at the resurrection of the dead shall our bodies be brought out of their dark prisons, and we shall rejoice in the everlasting light and glory of God.

12. The seventh consolation is, "Then she that is mine enemy shall see it, and shame shall cover her." This is the proper punishment of wicked men who rejoice at the affliction of others, that they shall be covered with confusion. The time will certainly come, when the mockers shall be struck with unavoidable shame, and shall be convinced by

their own consciences, of the wrong which they have done to others. This was Shimei's case, who could not but blush and be confounded in the presence of David and Solomon. 2 Sam. 19 : 19 ; 1 Kings 2 : 44. "It is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you : and to you who are troubled, rest." 2 Thess. 1 : 6, 7. "I rejoiced not at the destruction of him that hated me, nor lifted up myself when evil found him. Neither have I suffered my mouth to sin, by wishing a curse to his soul." Job 31 : 29, 30. "Love your enemies; bless them that curse you; do good to them that hate you; and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you : that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven : for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain upon the just and the unjust." Matt. 5 : 44, 45.

CHAPTER L.

SHOWING HOW HOPE IS TESTED IN SEASONS OF ADVERSITY ; IT MAKETH NOT ASHAMED.

Thou shalt know that I am the Lord ; for they shall not be ashamed that wait for me.— ISA. 49 : 23.

AS *faith* is nothing else but a fixed and steady assurance by which the devout Christian depends perfectly and entirely on the favor and mercy of God promised in Christ Jesus (Heb. 11 : 1), so *hope* is a continued and patient waiting for the accomplishment of that promise which is the object of faith, and is nothing else but a patient, constant, and persevering faith.

2. Of this hope St. Paul says, that it "maketh not ashamed" (Rom. 5 : 5) : being, as well as faith itself, founded upon a firm, immovable, and eternal basis. And this is God himself, who never faileth those that wait for him ; and for the same reason, the peace, joy, rest, glory, and confidence imparted by hope are eternal. On this foundation, he who hopes stands fixed and secure amidst all the crosses and calamities of life; and though the rains descend, the floods come, and the boisterous winds blow upon him, he is fearless and unmoved, knowing that "his house is built upon a rock." Matt. 7 : 25.

3. And as hope is built upon an immovable foundation, and the things of this world are fleeting and uncertain ; therefore its rest, its joy, its entire dependence, are in God alone, despising the riches, pleasures, honors, and glories of the world. "They that trust in the Lord, shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth forever. As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people." Ps. 125 : 1, 2.

4. On the other hand, they whose hopes are founded on the transitory riches, honors, and pleasures of this world, are perpetually exposed to all the fears, cares, and calamities of life ;

lie at the mercy of every blast of inconstant fortune, by which they are tossed to and fro; and depend upon the uncertain will of the world for every quiet moment they enjoy.

5. This can never be learned but under the discipline of the cross. For such is the nature of affliction, that it searches and discovers the inmost recesses of the soul; and shows us whether the hope that is in us be true or false. By this touchstone, we often find that our hopes have not been so much fixed upon God himself, as upon the favors and blessings he bestows; that we have built upon the sand, and idolized the creature, instead of worshipping the Creator. For so great is the blindness of our nature, that we often rest in the creatures, instead of raising our minds from them to the Creator, as he designed. For with this intent God bestows on man so many and great blessings, that by the gifts he may be drawn to the Giver; and learn to know, love, fear, reverence, and hope in God alone. But so great is the corruption of our nature, that we are not disposed to serve God for nought; and we worship him not for his own sake, but for the sake of what he bestows.

6. Upon this account, it is necessary that God should sometimes visit us with crosses and afflictions, and deprive us of his good things which we have abused; that so we may learn to praise, and glorify, and depend on him alone. Nay, we sometimes proceed so far, as to trust in ourselves, and entirely depend on our own power and abilities; then it is that God in mere mercy interposes; and, that we may not grow too proud, breaks us in pieces, humbles, and confounds us, and so empties us of ourselves, that we may be filled with all the fulness of God. This we cannot be, without being first emptied of all that arrogance, pride, and self-conceit, which stand in perfect opposition to the grace of God.

7. Hence hope is a *militant* virtue, fighting against all that confidence in ourselves, all that self-exaltation upon the score of our own gifts, merit, righteousness, prosperity, honors, and riches, in which the natural man places all his confidence. The business of hope is to oppose and conquer all these delusions of the devil, and to seek rest and peace in God alone.

8. Hence it follows, that hope, like faith and charity, has God only for its object. Whosoever aims at any other mark, or places his hope on any other being, is destitute of any well-founded hope. As all created beings when out of God are nothing; it follows that the hope reposed in them is also nothing. So then, these three virtues, faith, hope, and charity, are in the highest sense spiritual, admitting of no earthly mixture, but are fixed entirely on God, who is their eternal and invisible basis. To this refers that passage of St. Paul, "Hope that is seen, is not hope; for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?" Rom. 8: 24. Whosoever, therefore, places his hope upon anything that is visible, has not the invisible God for his support, but rests upon a shadow; and when the visible world, which is his basis, shall sink into nothing, by consequence his hope, that was built upon it, must sink and perish with it.

9. Consider this, O man, and by carefully comparing time with eternity, persuade thyself to entertain a true and saving hope, and to be led into a state of firm and lasting peace. Eternity is unchangeable, ever constant, always the same; but time is nothing but change and revolution.

The brightest day declines and ends in darkness, weeks are swallowed up in months, and months in years; the opening spring and fruitful summer sink, by degrees, into a desolate winter; and not only so, but all the elementary bodies are in a state of change, always shifting from one appearance to another; not to mention the continual motions of the heavens. So that this world cannot be the region of rest. For whatsoever is subject to time, is continually passing, and vanishing; in a word, "All is vanity" (Eccles. 1 : 2), and we shall never rest but in eternity. And though all men, both good and bad, long for peace and tranquillity; yet they, and they only, shall find it, who have learned to lose and resign themselves in Christ, the eternal rest of the soul. And this is not so much the work of labor and study, as of quietness and hope. Isa. 30 : 15.

10. Moreover, the Christian's hope must be tried, not only by the loss of temporal things, but also by the withholding of the communications of divine grace and favor (as commonly happens in great temptations); that seeing ourselves deprived even of those most excellent and spiritual blessings, on which we depend, our hope may arrive at the highest pitch of purity and sincerity, and rest on God alone. In such a case "we must hope, even against hope" (Rom. 4 : 18), as we read that Abraham did. Here a man must, with his blessed Redeemer, be deserted and forsaken, not only by man, but by God himself. And this is properly "to be conformed to the image of the Son of God." Rom. 8 : 29. This is the truest test or probation of the Christian's hope.

11. For, whereas, in other afflictions, our patience, humility, devotion, and charity, are principally exercised; in these spiritual trials of the conscience, our hope is eminently proved and tried, whether it be sincere or not. In this probation, though a man be perfectly despoiled of all his grace, yet shall he at last triumph in that "hope which maketh not ashamed." And though the soul that is thus tried, be sometimes ready to fall into impatience, murmuring, blasphemy, or the like; yet there remains, as it were, some gentle breath of hope, arising from the ground of the heart, by the power of the divine Spirit, which contradicts and opposes those unholy suggestions. When this combat is over, all his transgressions are forgiven, and his sins are covered and he himself is like "a brand plucked out of the fire" (Zech. 3 : 2); "or like a piece of an ear taken out of the mouth of the lion." Amos 3 : 12. Now this impatience being involuntary, and being opposed with sighs and groans unutterable, is by no means to be called despair; considering withal, that this is the sharpest conflict, the severest trial of the Christian's hope; and these are the "unutterable groanings" which St. Paul mentions. Rom. 8 : 26.

12. They that undergo these trials, are the greatest saints, and are nearer to God than those who repose all their hope and confidence in themselves. The pride of such men, in vainly arrogating any perfections to themselves, makes them in the highest degree blasphemers against God; whereas the disciples of the cross are his dearest children, as we may see in the examples of Job and David: for by being thus stripped of themselves, they are purified as gold in the refiner's fire; and being thus cleansed from all their dross of pride and vainglory, they shine in the glory of the divine image,

like a beautiful jewel set in the purest gold; so that nothing remains of which the proud man can boast.

13. By such trials as these, a man is taught to put his trust in nothing but in God alone. For when affliction has taken everything else from us, God alone cannot be taken from us. Yea, affliction is so far from separating us from God, that it rather brings us to God, restoring us to God, and God to us. It is hope, therefore, that preserves us in calamities, so that we are not consumed, and, therefore, it "maketh us not ashamed." Rom. 5:5. But as the soul came out from God, so must she return thither again, void of all love of the creatures; and when a man passes out of himself and all the creatures, whither can he go, or where can he rest, but in the hands of his God, who comprehendeth and upholdeth the world, and all that is therein? Isaiah 40:12. Whosoever, therefore, bids farewell to the world, and is divested of all love of himself and the creatures, having his heart fixed on no earthly thing, but being perfectly free and at liberty, resigning himself and all his concerns into the hands of God, and being content under every dispensation of providence—he may be truly said to rest in God. But those who are entangled in the love of themselves and the creatures, being slaves to their own wills, resting in them, and not submitting to the will of God, must perish in the end.

CHAPTER LI.

COMFORT FOR THOSE THAT ARE WEAK IN FAITH.

A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench.—Isaiah 42:3.

IN this verse the holy prophet comforts those that are weak in faith by two beautiful similitudes, excellently adapted to the purpose. For as a bruised reed (to which he first alludes) must be handled very gently, lest it be entirely broken to pieces; and as the smoking flax, when once it has taken fire, must be continually encouraged by a gentle breath, for fear of blowing it out; so our blessed Redeemer, who knows our infirmities, treats us with great gentleness, reviving from time to time the spark of faith within us, with the soft and gentle breath of his Spirit, that we may not be discouraged by our manifold infirmities, but be enlivened and strengthened under them. Isaiah 57:15. And because this weakness of faith is a very grievous temptation, to which all Christians are more or less exposed; therefore has the Holy Spirit, in the Word of God, furnished us with very strong consolations against it, which ought to be deeply rooted in our mind, that we may have them in readiness, and apply them with success in the sad hour of temptation.

2. (1) We must carefully remember, that faith is not of ourselves, but is the gift and work of God; "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me, draw him." John

6 : 29, 44. "Who believe, according to the working of his mighty power." Ephes. 1 : 19. "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." Ephes. 2 : 8. "Let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith." Heb. 12 : 1, 2. "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us." Rom. 5 : 5. "We have the first fruits of the Spirit, which helpeth our infirmities." Rom. 8 : 23, 26. Now, since faith is the work of God, and not our own, it follows, that it is not in our power to have it in such measures and proportions as we please. And whereas he has promised to save us by faith, it follows, that he knows how strong our faith ought to be, for the obtaining that great end, and will strengthen it accordingly. Therefore this was the answer of God to St. Paul: "My grace is sufficient for thee." 2 Cor. 12 : 9. "A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven." John 3 : 27.

3. (2) Whilst we are in this life, we must not expect to arrive at the highest pitch of perfection. This God permits, with a design to cure that natural pride and vanity of spirit to which the best of us are subject, by the daily sense of our great and manifold infirmities. To this we may refer the words addressed by St. Paul to the Philippians, "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that, for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus." Phil. 3 : 12. As if he had said, "Though I am not yet so strong in faith, as to be able to apprehend him as I ought, yet I am apprehended in him; that is, I am in Christ Jesus by faith." Let us, considering these things, bear patiently the infirmities of our nature, till we can attain to perfection.

4. (3) God does not despise or reject our weak faith, but cherishes, strengthens, and improves it, and at last crowns it with a blessed conclusion. In this sense we are to understand and apply those golden passages that follow: "A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench." Isaiah 43 : 3. "Thou hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat." Isaiah 25 : 4. "Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not; behold, your God will come and save you." Isaiah 35 : 3, 4. "He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might, he increaseth strength." Isaiah 40 : 29. "The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary." Isaiah 50 : 4. "I revive the spirit of the humble, and the heart of the contrite ones." Isaiah 57 : 15. "The Lord hath sent me to preach good tidings unto the meek, to bind up the brokenhearted," and to comfort all that mourn. Isaiah 61 : 1. In this sense we may understand that passage in Exod. 34 : 26. "Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk;" that is, thou shalt not grieve the tender, weak faith of a babe in Christ. A strong and vigorous faith can bear anything, can pass through the flames of fire, and the floods of water; but a young, tender faith, must be softly and gently treated, like a bruised reed, which is in continual danger of being broken to

pieces. "I have satiated the weary soul, and I have replenished every sorrowful soul." Jer. 31: 25. They that labor under the weakness of faith, are the poor in spirit, to whom the blessing is promised, "Blessed are the poor in spirit." Matt. 5 : 3. They that feel the weakness of their faith, are sick in spirit: and to them must be applied for their consolation, that passage in St. Matthew, "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick." Matt. 9 : 12. "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations." Rom. 14: 1. "To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak." 1 Cor. 9 : 22. "I will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick." Ezek. 34: 16. "Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." John 6 : 37. On these promises, full of divine consolation, let all who are weak in faith entirely depend, and satisfy themselves that God is faithful and true (Psalm 33: 4), and will not fail in his promises. To this head also we refer the instances of those that have been weak in faith. Such was the man (Mark 9 : 23, 24), who, when our Lord said, "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth;" answered with tears, "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief!" The nobleman. John 4 : 47. The disciples in the ship. Matt. 8 : 24. St. Peter sinking in the sea, when our Lord stretched out his hand and supported him. Matt. 14 : 31. Therefore, says St. Paul, "Comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient towards all men." 1 Thess. 5 : 14.

5. (4) God has, indeed, the greatest concern for those that are weak in faith. Our Lord himself tells us, "They that be (strong and) whole need not a physician, but they that are sick (and weak)." Matt. 9 : 12. The shepherd leaves his ninety and nine sheep in the wilderness, and goes seeking that which was lost, until he find it (Luke 15 : 4); and as tender mothers show the most attention to their weak and sickly children; so does our Heavenly Father to those that are weak in faith.

6. (5) But if thou say in thy heart that thou perceivest scarcely a grain of faith in thyself, then I would ask, Dost thou sincerely desire to have faith? If thou dost, all is well; fear not. For since it is God that worketh in us "to will," it follows, that whosoever finds in himself that good will and desire, finds in himself the work of God. Hence let him be encouraged and assured that he who has given us *the will*, will also give us the power *to do*. Phil. 1 : 6; 2 : 13.

7. (6) God is so compassionate to devout prayers and desires, that he never disappoints the hopes of those that trust in him. "Lord, thou hast heard the desire of the humble: thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear." Ps. 10 : 17; 9 : 18. Wherefore, thy faith is as great as thy desire of obtaining it. "For God trieth the hearts and reins." Ps. 7 : 9. "Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him." Ps. 91 : 14.

8. (7) It is therefore better to glory in the weakness, than in the strength of our faith. For it is the will of God concerning us, that we fall not into spiritual pride. "My strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." 2 Cor. 12 : 9. Let this be thy comfort when thou laborest under weakness of faith.

9. (8) Faith, though it be ever so weak, is still faith. For our salva-

tion depends not upon the worthiness of our faith, whether it be strong or weak, but upon Jesus Christ, on whom it lays hold. As, therefore, a precious jewel may be held by the hands of a little infant as well as of a strong man, so a weak faith may as well lay hold on the merits of Christ Jesus (the true Christian's only hope and treasure), as that which is much stronger, and by consequence, both be capable of the same righteousness and blessedness. And as the apple of the eye, small and delicate as it is, can perceive not only the light and splendor of the meridian sun, but even the sun itself, though so many times larger than the earth, so does the eye of faith, though weak and infirm, perceive and feel the Sun of righteousness (Mal. 4:2), the Lord Jesus Christ, with all the bright rays of his spiritual gifts and graces.

10. (9) Such is the nature of faith, that it is sometimes stronger and sometimes weaker; and sometimes the light thereof seems to be darkness. This has been attested by the examples of almost all the saints, particularly David, and Abraham, who is called "the father of the faithful" (Rom. 4 : 11; Gal. 3 : 7); and yet (Gen. 12 : 11) he was afraid that the Egyptians would put him to death on account of Sarah, his wife, and this, too, after he had received the promise. Moses also, at the water of Meribah, betrayed a want of faith. Numb. 20 : 10–13; Exod. 17 : 7. David's faith was sometimes so strong as to raise him, as it were, up to heaven; and then again so weak as to leave him to sink, as it were, into hell, and make him complain to God that "he was cut off from before His eyes." Ps. 31 : 23. Whence it follows, that we must not conclude because a man's faith is weak, that therefore he has none at all; or that they who are contending against the weakness of faith, are therefore forsaken by God. We know that fire is often hidden under ashes, though neither light nor heat appear; we know that the trees are alive, though in winter they are stripped of their leaves: so we may in like manner conclude, that those people may have faith towards God, in whom we do not at all times discern signs or tokens of it. For the Spirit of the Lord is like the wind, that bloweth when and whither it pleases. John 3 : 8.

11. (10) He that complains of the weakness of his faith, shows plainly, that faith is striving and struggling within him, and a *striving faith* is a true faith; for there is a continual struggle in every man between faith and unbelief. He is perpetually assaulted by temptations to unbelief, so that his life is one continued combat; and he is obliged to be as watchful, as though he were in the midst of drawn swords, and expected every moment to be cut in pieces. Here is the trial of the Christian's faith; here is the exercise of his patience, to unite his earthly heart with Christ; to make the barren soil of his soul fit to receive the heavenly seed; to make the darkness of corrupt nature capable of the divine light. The flesh is continually inclining to the broad way of the world, and endeavoring to tyrannize over the spirit; the darkness is no sooner scattered, than it endeavors to recover its ground, and spread itself again over the face of the soul. This is what all the saints have confessed and lamented, and it is a most certain token of the presence of true faith. On the other hand, where there is no faith at all, there is no cause found for

striving. Here let the languishing soul call to mind that comfortable assurance given us, that "God will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it." 1 Cor. 10 : 13. "God giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might he increaseth strength." Isa. 40 : 29.

12. (11) Let us be assured, that whensoever, in our greatest infirmities, we can but think upon Jesus Christ, he will be with us, and dwell in us by faith. Thus it is said, "In all places where I record my name, I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee." Exod. 20 : 24. For we cannot so much as think upon God, without his special presence and assistance. Moreover, being engrafted into Christ, as branches into the living vine (John 15 : 1, etc.), we truly live in him, and draw life and nourishment from him. "Our life," and the strength of our faith, are "hid with Christ in God" (Col. 3 : 3); and the Holy Spirit witnesseth the same in our hearts, by the joy, peace, and comfort, which he produces there. Rom. 8 : 16. As in the Old Testament, there was no Prophet who heard not God speaking in him; so under the Gospel, there is no Christian but hears Christ speaking in him, and, from time to time tastes the unction of the Holy Spirit. And so strong is this union of our faith with Christ, that all the power of death and hell cannot dissolve it; because Christ, who is the life and root of our faith, is immortal. Though thou hast not always so lively a perception of this in thy heart, yet "greater is he that is in thee, than he that is in the world." 1 John 4 : 4.

13. (12) When we are weak in faith, let us look up unto Christ Jesus our Redeemer, and merciful High Priest, who offered up himself for us on the cross, and is praying that our faith may be strengthened; as he did for St. Peter, "I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not" (Luke 22 : 32); to whom also he stretched out his almighty and saving hand, when he thought himself sinking into the sea. Matt. 14 : 31. And he saith, "Holy Father, keep them through thine own name; neither pray I for these alone, (the Apostles), but for them also which shall believe on me through their word." John 17 : 11, 20. So also we are told, "We have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Who is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." Heb. 2 : 17; 4 : 15; Rom. 8 : 34. This intercession ought to be our comfort when our faith is weak and languishing; from whence we should, by a lively and steadfast faith, expect a blessing.

14. (13) Our next support is, the divine mercy, which is inexpressibly great, as infinite as God himself. Of this let no man despair. This mercy of his anticipates us, waits for us, supports us, and endures forever. And this he never denies to any one. Come then, ye that complain of the weakness of your faith, cast yourselves into the protecting arms of divine love, which will never leave you nor forsake you.

15. (14) God, who has wrought the beginning of faith in us, has graciously promised, that he will "perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1 : 6); that he will "stablish, strengthen, settle us" (1 Pet. 5 : 10); and that we shall be "kept by the power of God through faith unto sal-

vation, receiving the end of our faith, even the salvation of our souls." 1 Pet. 1 : 5, 9. This is the end that God proposed to our faith, when he first gave us the beginning of it. Faith being, therefore, the operation and work of God, must be perfected by its divine Author. For this cause the Epistle to the Hebrews (Heb. 12 : 2) calls the blessed Jesus, not only the *Author*, but also, the *Finisher* of our faith. And Christ himself tells us: "No man shall pluck my sheep out of my hand." John 10 : 28.

16. (15) To this end he has given us various means whereby our faith may be strengthened and preserved, namely, the Word, the Sacraments, and prayer. "Lord, increase our faith" (Luke 17 : 5), said the disciples. "Lord, help thou mine unbelief." Mark 9 : 24. Moreover, God has promised "his Holy Spirit to them that ask him." Luke 11 : 13. "The Spirit also helpeth our infirmities." Rom. 5 : 5 ; 8 : 26. In a word, this is the end and design of Christianity, that we may grow and be perfected in faith.

17. (16) Lastly. Our faith is founded on God's eternal love to us, "Whom he did predestinate, them he also justified." Rom. 8 : 30. But we are justified by faith alone in Christ Jesus. Rom. 3 : 28. "God hath chosen us to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth." 2 Thess. 2 : 13. Come then, comfort thyself with these promises; sink not under the weakness of thy faith ! When thy faith seems to be at its lowest ebb, then is thy Saviour nearer to thee than thou thinkest. This was the case with the disciples; when they looked upon themselves as lost in the tempest, then Christ was at hand to save them. Matt. 8 : 24–26. Let us also be persuaded, that our Redeemer and Saviour is never so near us, as when we think ourselves in most danger.

CHAPTER LII.

COMFORTING INSTRUCTIONS FOR THOSE THAT ARE LABORING UNDER GREAT TEMPTATIONS IN SPIRIT.

I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction.—ISA. 48 : 10

IT is an undoubted truth that all spiritual sorrow proceeds from God. For "the Lord killeth, and maketh alive : he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up." 1 Sam. 2 : 6, 7. By the "grave" in this place, is meant such a state of spiritual afflictions as, like the grave, is void of all light and comfort. The soul that is thrust down into this prison, looks upon itself as dying and pining away; as hated, despised, and persecuted by every creature of God. In this disconsolate state, the poor man cries out with holy David, "My soul refused to be comforted." Ps. 77 : 2. And well it might, when both the Scripture and God himself were withholden from him. This is that "grave" into which God brings the soul. Here it finds no

comfort but in silence and resignation, in those unutterable sighs and groans which proceed from the ground of the heart; for so great is its distress, that it cannot so much as think upon God, or the promises contained in his holy Word. Faith grows weak, hope languishes, and the whole man is feeble, withered like grass (Ps. 38: 8, 9; 102 : 3), and ready to perish, were he not inwardly supported by the secret Word and power of God.

2. In this grave or shadow of death, we find our Lord Jesus Christ, when "his soul was exceeding sorrowful even unto death; and in his agony his sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood." Matt. 26 : 38; Luke 22 : 44. In this state a man undergoes greater afflictions than in death itself. Yea, here a man wishes for death, and longs to find a grave where he may rest from his unspeakable labors and sufferings. Job. 7 : 15. Thus we find Job repeatedly wishing for death. And our blessed Lord himself, under the agonies of death, cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!" Matt. 27 : 46. He complains that he was forsaken of God, though He was continually present with him, and preserved him under all his trouble. But now, what can be more wonderful than that Christ himself should complain for want of comfort, considering his intimate union with God? For he was both God and man. Yet God had so withdrawn his consolations from him, that his *human nature* was left desolate and comfortless. Now if the blessed Jesus, who was united to the eternal Godhead and anointed with the heavenly oil of gladness, endured a conflict so bitter, surely sinful man has no reason to wonder, when he is brought under the same fiery trial, as if some strange thing had happened unto him. 1 Pet. 4 : 12.

3. We suffer nothing but what our blessed Master suffered before us; and certainly nothing is more reasonable than that the members should suffer with the Head.

4. This, therefore, is a kind of trial whether thou art truly a member of Christ, and a partaker of his sufferings. Rev. 1 : 9. Such seems to have been Hezekiah's case when he complained—"Like a crane or a swallow, so did I chatter: I did mourn as a dove." Isa. 38 : 14. And Job's—"I cry unto thee, and thou dost not hear me: I stand up, and thou regardest me not." Job 7 : 3; 30 : 20. And so again, "If I had called, and he had answered me; yet would I not believe that he had hearkened unto my voice." Job 9 : 16. Such were the complaints of holy David (Ps. 6; 13; 38; 88). In these scriptures we may see how wonderfully all the saints and servants of God have been purified in this furnace of affliction. This was the ground of that warmth of feeling which we meet with in the words of Job and the holy Psalmist. Sometimes they are so much bereft of hope, that they could not think it possible that God should ever show mercy to them; at other times, they are full of hope and confidence, and believe that "their Redeemer liveth" (Job 19 : 25), as Job expresses it. Yet the carnal man has no understanding of such sufferings, or of the complaints arising from them. This we find by the example of Job's friends, who, not understanding what was the true state of his distressed and afflicted soul, reproved him as one that had lost patience, and that charged God foolishly. When a man is come into this state, he falls into such a degree of unbelief that he is

not conscious of the least trace of faith remaining in his soul. All the powers of faith being, as it were, collected in the centre of the soul, seem to the man to be *lost;* though they still operate in secret, and breathe in sighs and groanings unutterable. This absence of faith is a kind of torture to the soul. Therefore the man cannot believe that God will be merciful to him, but cries out, "O how willingly would I believe, if it would but please God to give me the power!" And in the height of this conflict, the Scriptures themselves afford him no comfort. This is that crisis of the soul when God, by humbling us, shows us how unworthy and vile we are in ourselves; yea, that of ourselves we are *nothing*, but that all our sufficiency is of God; so that thence we may learn not to trust in ourselves. Nevertheless, the poor soul occasionally perceives some distant gleams of light breaking through the thick darkness, which administer comfort and support, and preserve it from desperation.

5. Now, though it may happen that a man in the bitterness of his soul grows impatient, and is tempted to fret against God, yet let him remember that God is merciful. He knows whereof we are made; he sees the struggle of our souls under the fiery trial, when he sets his hand to cleanse us from our impurities. In a word, the most holy and best beloved children of God, are they that have passed through this furnace of affliction; as we may see by the examples of Job (Job 42 : 2, etc.), of David, and Jeremiah. Jer. 20 : 12, etc. These learned faith in the school, and under the discipline of the cross; whilst the delicate Christian who flees from the cross, and expects to learn it amidst the enjoyments of the world, will find himself miserably deceived in the end. But further,

6. (2) Let us call to mind that noble saying of Jeremiah, "The Lord will not cast off forever; but though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies. For he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men." Lam. 3 : 30, 31, 33. Whence thou mayest learn, that though the Lord suffer thee to be afflicted for a season, yet he will not cast thee off forever. Perhaps, however, thou wilt say, that the evil thoughts with which thou art troubled, are not from God, but from Satan. Now, though it cannot be denied that they are suggested to us by Satan; yet it is also true, that Satan can do nothing but by God's permission. In this case, look unto Jesus, whom our heavenly Father suffered to be tempted by the same adversary. The fiery darts (Eph. 6 : 16) which the Evil One cast at our blessed Saviour, came indeed from him, and not from God; but it was God that gave him permission to assault as he did. And though our blessed Lord bore all this, yet he still continued to be the dearly beloved Son of God, nor could the tempter with all his art and power do him the least harm. Matt. 4 : 1, etc. Hear this, O afflicted soul, and believe that thou also shalt be safe and unhurt amid all the fiery darts of the wicked one. Remember the case of Job, when, by God's permission, the devil so afflicted him internally and externally, that he cursed the day of his birth; yet was God still with him, and we find him thus expressing himself to God: "These things hast thou hid in thine heart: I know that this is with thee." Job 10 : 13.

7. Having thus discovered the *origin*

of this spiritual affliction, let us next inquire into the *reasons* why God sends it upon us.

8. First, then, it is certain that the true inward taste of the Word of God, is accompanied with unspeakable joy, peace, and comfort, vastly surpassing any enjoyments of this life. This is the true joy of our souls, a foretaste of eternal life, arising from the true and living knowledge of Christ Jesus; by which we discover the heart of God full of the most tender compassions, and an ardent and eternal love towards lost mankind. Now, so corrupt and perverse is human nature, that it is too apt to be exalted above measure, by the abundance of these divine manifestations, and to make them occasions of spiritual pride; and the man who is thus visited and comforted from above, will be apt to think highly of himself, to overvalue his sanctity, and to think meanly of the rest of the world, who are strangers to these consolations; and thus, forsaking the fountain of living waters, whence all the streams of blessing flow, and to which, with all humility, they ought to be ascribed; the man grows vain and arrogant, and sets himself up in the place of God. This perverseness of soul, as it is directly contrary to true penitence, and to the appointed way of salvation, so it is very hateful to God. This causes him to withdraw his consolations from us, and to hide himself in thick darkness; so that though we call and cry, and search ever so diligently, we shall not be able to find Him. This is a deplorable state, when we are hanging, as it were, between heaven and hell, oppressed and afflicted on every side, not knowing whither to fly for relief or comfort; having no certain evidence whether we believe or not, whether we hope or not, whether God be angry with us or not, whether we are in a state of life or of death. This is that darkness and desolation which we find described in Psalm 88; of which the Psalmist speaks also in Ps. 31 : 22. "I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes. Nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my supplications when I cried unto thee."

9. Now, although nothing is more bitter to us than to be so long deprived of the comforts of the divine presence; yet even this deprivation itself is more profitable to the soul, than all the enjoyments and glories of the world. By this, as by a fiery trial, we are taught humility, repentance, contempt of the world, and the true value of all its favors and enjoyments; that these are dangerous, transitory, and perishing, and can give no solid comfort to the distressed soul. And though the soul in this state is encompassed with perplexities and fears, so that it can hardly lift up itself to God, yet there is left a kind of deep and secret sorrow, venting itself in holy sighs, and devout aspirations towards God, and a longing for his favor. Hence we may learn how great a good God is to the soul, and that no true, solid, or constant peace can be found except in Him. This cannot be learned any where but in this school of temptation; in which alone the truest knowledge is to be acquired. And whosoever is unacquainted with this, knows not God and Christ as they ought to be known.

10. And would to God, that for his glory, and our own unspeakable advantage, we would readily submit to this visitation, which is designed for the trial of our faith, even as gold in the furnace is tried! Then we should quickly reap the amazing benefits of

such a cleansing. For the faithful soul that can hold out, and not faint under it, comes forth glorious as gold out of the fire, cleansed from all its dross; so that neither fire, nor water, nor the cross, nor death, nor Satan, can hurt it. Such a one will learn how to behave himself ever afterwards with patience and humility, both in prosperity and adversity; not to sink under the cross; not to be presumptuous in prosperity; not to depend upon himself, or be puffed up with his own fancied perfections; but to look up steadfastly to God, the everlasting fountain and giver of all goodness; and to embrace every dispensation of Providence, whether sweet or bitter, as his only happiness; and, in every state or condition of soul or body, to rejoice in God alone.

11. Secondly, whensoever it shall please God to cast any of us, his creatures, into this trying furnace, it will be much more consistent and profitable for us to pray for patience under it, than for deliverance from it. For when once the fire of temptation has purged away the dross of our iniquities, our pride, luxury, covetousness, and envy, it will be much easier for us to endure afterwards other fiery trials, by having our own will swallowed up in the will and good pleasure of God. But when from an excessive indulgence of the infirmities of our corrupt nature, we endeavor to avoid this fiery trial, it often happens that before we can receive any benefit from it, we are contriving to make our escape. So that if God did not often keep us under the trial against our will, we should fly from it, without considering whether we were sufficiently purified, according to the will of God and the necessities of our corrupt nature: like children, who, if their parents or physicians did not prevent, would throw away that bitter cup which alone can cure their disorders. But God knows our case, and what is proper for us, better than we ourselves; and therefore he has appointed certain measures of affliction, to which he confines the soul, till he sees it proper to release her. So that we ought not so much to pray for deliverance from temptations, as for patience under them.

12. Thirdly, our deliverance is so certain, that we have not the least reason to doubt of it; for "though the Lord cause grief, yet will he have compassion, according to the multitude of his mercies." Lam. 3 : 32. This is the promise of God, who is truth itself, and it therefore ought diligently to be weighed and considered by us. It is much better to know and digest some few comfortable passages of Scripture, or even only one of this kind, than to burden our memory with a great many without true spiritual relish. For when a man has by a lively faith digested one, he will easily understand and digest all the rest; and he that can derive comfort from *one* text, will thereby learn to do the same by all the rest. It will be very useful to repeat frequently, with lively affection, the 88th Psalm, where thou wilt see the state of thy soul described. There thou wilt find that there have been others in the world before thee, who have been tried and afflicted as thou art, and yet have afterwards been delivered and comforted of God, as we find in Psalm 89, where the holy man, rejoicing in the divine comfort, begins, as in a rapture, "I will sing of the mercies of the Lord for ever." Be thou confident, therefore, and believe that God will also in due time comfort thee with the same consolation.

For the Evil spirit, who always delights to afflict the souls of men, has, from the beginning of the world, made it his business to gall and wound them with his fiery darts. As in a tempestuous sea one wave is continually rolling upon another, so do the various temptations of Satan pursue the afflicted soul; sometimes oppressing it with fearful and melancholy thoughts; at others, with impatience, unbelief, blasphemous and wicked thoughts. The terrors and miseries of such a soul are sometimes so great, that no creature can give it comfort; yea, those very things which give joy and delight to others, are to such a man, not only joyless, but burdensome. The whole world is to him but one bitter cross; yea, even God himself appears dreadful to him. Thus Job bitterly complains (chap. 7 : 13, etc.); and the agony is increased by the sting of his own conscience, which terrifies him with this dreadful sentence, "There is no help for thee in thy God." Ps. 3 : 2.

13. Against these wiles of the devil there is no better remedy than to endeavor to strengthen thyself after the examples of Job, David, and other holy men. (1) By bearing thy affliction as long as it shall please God; and waiting patiently till the clouds of darkness be driven away. Isa. 54 : 11. "I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him, until he bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness." Micah 7 : 9. Where God afflicteth, it is in no man's power to comfort. "The Lord killeth, and maketh alive; he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up." 1 Sam. 2 : 6.

14. (2) We must, in this case, stop our ears against the opinions of the world, and, with Job, disregard the accusations of our friends, the terrors of the devil, who is the enemy of all peace and comfort, the reflections of our own hearts, the stings of our own consciences, and all the objections of flesh and blood. For, "if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart" (1 John 3 : 20), yea, than all the world, or the devil himself. Rather call to mind what God himself has promised to such afflicted souls. "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit." Isa. 66 : 2. "I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction." Isa. 48 : 10.

15. (3) Consider also the examples of holy men. Did not they suffer as thou dost, and were they not at last delivered? Does not David complain, "How long wilt thou forget me, O Lord? for ever?" Ps. 13 : 1. And did God forsake him in his troubles? No; for he adds, "I have trusted in thy mercy; my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation!" Ver. 5. He complains, "Hath God forgotten to be gracious?" Ps. 77 : 9. But did God leave him in this extremity? No, certainly, for after his deliverance he adds, "I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High." Ver. 10. Thus when God discovered himself in terrors to Jeremiah, he prays, "Be not a terror unto me!" (Jer. 17 : 17), but immediately adds, "Thou art my hope in the day of evil." Did not Jesus Christ himself cry out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Ps. 22 : 1. But was he forsaken of God? No; for he adds, "I will declare thy name unto my brethren" (Ps. 22 : 22): and "I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord." Ps. 118 : 17.

16. Thou also, after this example of thy Saviour, must be content to drink

the wine mingled with gall and myrrh (Matt. 27 : 34), that thou mayest hereafter sit down with him at his royal supper in the kingdom of heaven. Isa. 65 : 13. Learn, therefore, to bear his reproach (Heb. 13 : 13); and thou shalt be a partaker of his glory. Learn to be conformed to Christ crucified, that thou mayest be conformed to Christ glorified. Rom. 8 : 29; Phil. 3 : 21.

CHAPTER LIII.

CONSOLATIONS FOR THOSE WHO LABOR UNDER GREAT SPIRITUAL TEMPTATIONS.

When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them; I the God of Israel will not forsake them.—ISA. 41 : 17.

IN these words, the Holy Spirit comforts all those that are broken in heart, miserable, tempted, and thirsting after God; by whom they look upon themselves as forsaken and rejected, so that they cry out, "My soul is full of troubles; and my life draweth nigh unto the grave." Ps. 88 : 3. For the sake of such as these, I shall touch upon some few heads, by way of comfort and advice under these spiritual temptations.

2. (1) We are to remember, that no kinds of spiritual temptations, melancholy thoughts, terrors of soul, and stings of conscience, can happen to us without the particular permission and gracious will of God our heavenly Father, notwithstanding all the malice and fury of the Evil Spirit. For God has expressly told us in his Word, that the devil has not the least power over any creature; nor can he hurt even a hair of our heads. Matt. 10 : 30. All creatures are in the hand of God, and not in the power of the devil. Heb. 1 : 3. Much less has he any power over man, unless by the permission of God, for a certain season, as in the case of the Gergesenes (Matt. 8 : 32), and Job. Job 1 : 12.

3. Now, if he has no power of himself over a hair of our heads, or the least part of our bodies; much less can he of himself afflict, disquiet, or torment our souls. Hence David says, "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them." Ps. 34 : 7. And Zechariah, "I, the Lord, will be unto her a wall of fire round about." Zech. 2 : 5. So David prays, "Keep me as the apple of the eye." Ps. 17 : 8. And he acknowledges God to be the author of all the heavy trials of his spirit: "Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the deeps. Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and thou hast afflicted me with all thy waves." Ps. 88 : 6, 7. So likewise, "Thou which hast shewed me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth." Ps. 71 : 20. Agreeable to which is the song of Hannah, "The Lord killeth, and maketh alive; he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up." 1 Sam. 2 : 6. For as the Son of God

himself descended first into hell, before he ascended up into heaven; so likewise must the true members of his body experience the same, in the following manner. When a man's conscience is so awakened and enlightened by the Lord, as to feel in himself the strength of sin, the sting of death, the curse of the law, and the fiery darts of the devil; then is his wretched soul so oppressed with grief and horror, that with David (Ps. 77 : 3), it refuses to be comforted, and looks upon itself as rejected and persecuted by every creature of God. The man who is in this state, does not enjoy the least glimpse of comfort, believing that he deserves it not; he struggles with despair, he contends with hell, and has already a taste of its agony. This is the sting of hell, yea, hell itself, full of terror and amazement, darkness and despair. He that suffers this, is not indeed corporeally, but spiritually, and in his soul, brought down into hell; so that with his blessed Saviour at the mount of Olives, he is in an agony, is very heavy and sorrowful, even unto death. Luke 22 : 44.

4. But you will say, Is it not strange, that God should suffer his believing children, who have been baptized into Christ, who through him obtained remission of their sins, being justified through faith, and redeemed to eternal life—to be thus miserably tempted and afflicted by the devil, oppressed with dreadful thoughts, and to undergo this spiritual martyrdom? In answer to this, we must consider, that it is not our business to inquire into the secret reasons of God's ways, but to rest satisfied with what he has told us, namely, that all these kinds of affliction proceed from him. Now we may rest assured, that whatsoever comes from him, promotes our spiritual welfare, according to what we are told, that "all things work together for good, to them that love God." Rom. 8 : 28. There are, however, some reasons revealed, why God suffers his beloved children to fall into temptations so bitter.

5. The first may be to bring us to a true sense of the strength of sin, which is the sting of death (1 Cor. 15 : 56); of the curse of the law; of the wrath and justice of God; and of the cruel tyranny of Satan. These hang together, as it were, in a chain, as Hezekiah complains (Isaiah 38 : 14), when he chattered as a crane or a swallow, and mourned as a dove.

6. Secondly, That we may have worthy conceptions of the value and greatness of our blessed Saviour's passion, and of all the merits of our redemption; and hence learn that by the agony of his own soul, he has delivered us from the punishments of hell. Ps. 22 : 2.

7. Thirdly, That we may be conformed to the image of Christ. Rom. 8 : 29.

8. Fourthly, That we may learn to taste the efficacy of God's Holy Word, and the comforts that flow from it. Thus we are told, "by vexation (or temptation) only we shall understand the report" (or word). Isa. 28 : 19.

9. Fifthly, That we may learn to exercise faith, hope, charity, humility, and patience, that so "the trial of our faith may be found much more precious than gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire." 1 Pet. 1 : 7.

10. Sixthly, That we may afterwards have a more lively perception of the divine comforts, even as St. Paul says, "As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ." 2 Cor. 1 : 5.

11. Seventhly, That we may obtain

greater degrees of glory in the life to come, according to Rom. 8 : 17 : "If so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."

12. Though we even did not know that God intended these particular advantages by our sufferings; yet we ought to be satisfied with this one consideration, that our sufferings are ordered by the will of God. For if "the very hairs of our head are all numbered" (Matt. 10 : 30), how much more care, may we suppose, will God take of our souls, that the devil may not precipitate us into despair? Hence we may further learn, not to expect deliverance from any but God himself, through our Lord Jesus Christ, who has overcome the world and the devil. John 12 : 31; 16 : 11. He, therefore, that labors under temptation, must fly unto Jesus Christ; and from him alone expect that help, comfort, and peace, which nothing in this world can give him.

13. (2) These trials are not to be looked upon as tokens of God's *anger*, but rather of his infinite *mercy*, since he is hereby fitting us to be partakers with them who have through many temptations entered into glory. Such was David, who complains, "The sorrows of death compassed me." Psalm 18 : 4. And the whole 88th Psalm is full of lamentations of the pains and agony which he underwent in his soul. This, too, was the prophet Jeremiah's case, when he wished that his mother's womb had been his grave (Jer. 20 : 17); that he had never seen the light, that so he might have avoided his many bitter sufferings. Thus it was with Job, when he cried out: "O that my grief were thoroughly weighed, and my calamity laid in the balances together. For now it would be heavier than the sand of the sea." Job 6 : 2, 3. And "My soul chooseth strangling, and death, rather than my life." Job 7 : 15. Thus St. Paul was buffeted by "the messenger of Satan." 2 Cor. 12 : 7. Nor, lastly, did the Son of God himself, escape severe trials, when his holy body trembled, and his soul was exceeding sorrowful (Matt. 26 : 38), and when he cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Matt. 27 : 46.

14. From these examples we may learn that we are not the only persons who have been so severely tempted; but that saints and servants of God before us have been visited in the same manner. And as God forsook not them in their extreme agony, so we may assure ourselves that he will in his own time deliver us, as well as them. This is an argument full of consolation. As bodily diseases and persecutions are marks of the divine favor, since by them God endeavors to make us conformable to his Son (and on that account we ought to bear them with patience), so it is a much greater token of the divine favor, and of the glory that shall follow it, when he sends affliction on our souls, as well as on our bodies, and by a variety of crosses brings us to an entire conformity, both in body and soul, to Christ our Head. For as the body of the blessed Jesus, at the time of his passion, was overwhelmed with all kinds of pains, and sufferings, and his soul was full of anguish, distress, and sorrow: so must his spiritual body, in all its true and living members, be made partaker of the same sufferings, whether internal or external, so that the whole spiritual body, as well as the Head, may contribute, each member in its proportion, to fill up the measure of sufferings. This is what St. Paul means, "I fill up that which

is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh" (Col. 1 : 24): so that every living member of Christ must expect to bear his share of Christ's cross, in order to perfect that which is yet lacking in such sufferings. It ought, therefore, to make us rejoice in affliction, when we consider that "the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." Rom. 8 : 18. We should, when these spiritual storms blow hard upon us, bear with patience the paternal chastisement of God (Micah 7 : 9), expect his help, not faint in prayer, but think thus with ourselves: This is a season of sufferings; but when wrath has passed away, it will end in joy unspeakable and full of glory. Isa. 54 : 7, 8.

15. (3) We must support ourselves under this internal conflict, with the comforting promises of Jesus Christ, that in due time we shall conquer if we hold out and faint not. Gal. 6 : 9. Thus he tells us, "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me." John 14 : 30. And, "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." John 16 : 33. For as all the host of Israel triumphed in the person of David, when he slew Goliah, and routed the Philistines (1 Sam. 17 : 51); so the victory of our Lord is the victory of all true believers. Hence we are told, "Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony." Rev. 12 : 10, 11. Whenever, therefore, thou findest thyself assaulted by the fiery darts of the Evil One, and thy soul is afflicted with such suggestions as these: "Thou art damned; — thou art undone; — God hath forsaken thee;—thou art mine; —it is in vain for thee to hope, believe, or pray any longer," then take courage, and answer boldly: "O thou enemy of mankind, thou hast no power to condemn me. God hath not appointed thee to be my judge; but the faithful shall judge the world, and thee, at the last great day" (1 Cor. 6 : 3), yea, prince of this world, thou art judged already by the Son of God. John 16 : 11.

16. (4) As the nature of this spirit of blasphemy is such, that a Christian is forced to undergo it sorely against his will, and does all that in him lies to resist and oppose it; hence let him comfort himself, when he is tempted with the thought, that God will never lay it to his charge; since it is not he that acts, but the devil; for the soul is passive, and may, therefore, be assured that such thoughts shall never be imputed for sin. As people in a besieged town, cannot hinder the enemy from throwing fire into the town, though they may do what they can to quench it, and prevent its spreading; and as Hezekiah (Isa. 36 : 11) could not hinder the blasphemy of Rabshakeh; so we cannot hinder the devil from shooting his envenomed arrows at us. All that we have to do is, to bear it with penitential sorrow, and to take all the care we can, not to suffer our thoughts to vent themselves in blasphemous words; but, on the other hand, having set a guard upon our tongues, we should endeavor so to stifle these murmurings, that they break not out into a flame, as we read of Jeremiah. (Lam. 3 : 28.) Moreover, forasmuch as thou art assaulted against thy will, it is plain, that thou hast yet a living and struggling faith.

17. (5) We ought to be comforted, if we find but *one single aspiration of our hearts towards God*, or any devout affection springing up in our souls by the reading of any text of Holy Scripture. For this is that spark of faith and divine grace, which, like the smoking of flax, God will not quench, but preserve it in its weakest state, when it seems to be almost dead. Isa. 42 : 3. One devout aspiration such as this, is a certain sign that the Holy Spirit is still present with us, though in a manner almost undiscernible in the deepest ground and centre of the soul. For as the body is not looked upon as dead, whilst there is the least breath or pulse remaining; so we must believe that the Spirit of God, and faith, are not yet entirely gone, if only a feeble prayer and a word of God remain; for then the soul retains a spiritual and internal life, and is not entirely dead. And the soul ought to be content with the smallest spark of this inward light and life, till the Spirit of joy and liberty return to him, and comfort him with all the consolations of God. Let us suppose a man in such a case, that he can neither pray, nor even think a good thought; and that this inability is matter of the greatest grief to him; the anguish of such a soul, because it cannot pray, is in itself a true and effectual prayer. These are the unutterable sighs and groanings which St. Paul mentions. Rom. 8 : 26. And to this belongs what the prophet says, "When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them." Isa. 41 : 17.

18. (6) Be the temptations and afflictions of the heart ever so great, yet the Scripture assures us that it is the habitation of God, and not of the devil. That Satan has no possession of it, appears from the furious assaults he makes upon the afflicted soul, by which he endeavors to subdue it; but "greater is he that is in us, than he that is in the world." 1 John 4 : 4. "Fear thou not, for I am with thee." Isa. 41 : 10. Therefore, though this trial of the soul is the greatest affliction that can possibly befall it in this life, yet, forasmuch as we are assured that God will look unto those that are of contrite hearts, and will dwell with them (Isa. 57 : 15), that he sent the blessed Jesus from heaven to comfort the afflicted, and to preach glad tidings to the distressed (Isa. 61 : 2); and that He himself invites weary souls to come unto him (Matt. 11 : 28), therefore let no man despair when he finds himself plunged into this furnace of affliction. These are they whom God commanded his prophet to comfort: "Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not." Isa. 35 : 3, 4. And God tells us that "his strength is made perfect in weakness;" which induced St. Paul to say, "When I am weak, then am I strong." 2 Cor. 12 : 10. Yea, the grace of God is so far from forsaking a man, even when he is buffeted (2 Cor. 12 : 7) by Satan: that it was at that time particularly, that God told Paul, "My grace is sufficient for thee." 2 Cor. 12 : 7–9.

19. (7) There is not so much as one instance to be produced, of any man forsaken of God under this spiritual conflict; but, on the contrary, He has always restored his servants, "whom he has thus chosen in the furnace of affliction" (Isa. 48 : 10), to the same and to higher degrees of grace, than those whence they thought they had fallen. This ought to be matter of

great comfort to us, and persuade us that when the hour of trial is ended, the season of joy and redemption will quickly follow. "Happy is the man whom God correcteth: therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty. For he maketh sore, and bindeth up: he woundeth, and his hands make whole. He shall deliver thee in six troubles; yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee." Job 5: 17–19; Micah 7: 9. Let no man, therefore, faint under tribulation, but bear "the indignation of the Lord" for a little while (Ps. 112: 4; 97: 11), till the Sun of righteousness (Mal. 4: 2) arise upon him again with healing and consolation in his wings, for "light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart!"

20. (8) Tauler reckons these spiritual afflictions and trials among the singular gifts and favors of God, speaking thus of them: "In these great temptations, God deprives a man of all that he has given him, forcing him to descend into himself and see his own poverty and weakness; and also trying him, to discover how he will behave himself in this desolate state. And this is done when a man is forsaken; so that he knows nothing of God, his grace, his comforts, or the gifts which he once bestowed upon him; but which are now taken away, and concealed from his eyes, so that he knows not whither to fly or which way to turn. When a man is once brought into this state, there is nothing better for him than cheerfully and willingly to submit himself to the order and decree of God. It was, indeed, a great thing in the holy martyrs to lay down their lives for God; but they were so abundantly strengthened by the comforts of his Holy Spirit, that the most exquisite torments were to them but trifling and contemptible, and death itself had lost its terrors. But to have God hide his face, and deprive us of his grace and comfort, is a martyrdom much greater than theirs. This occurs when all the sins, all the infirmities and temptations, which a man has long ago conquered, assault him afresh, with greater violence than when he was the servant of sin. In this case, the best way is to suffer with patience, and to be entirely resigned to the all-wise providence of God." Such sufferers as these, Tauler calls "spiritual martyrs," from the bitter trials they undergo whilst deprived of the light of God's countenance, and the comfortable influences of his Spirit, which are so severe that they know not which way to turn for relief; and when they see and consider the gifts and graces bestowed upon others, they fall into bitter dejection of spirit, reckoning that it is their own fault that they are thus barren and destitute of spiritual joy. And though they take ever so much pains, they still seem to labor in vain; for they find their dryness and hardness of heart still increasing upon them; so that at last, being quite void of comfort, and having lost all patience, they fall into a secret distrust of God's mercy, and believe that he is offended with everything they do. At length they submit in patience, until God may make a change; for they themselves are utterly helpless. This is that which brings them to a conformity, not only with the saints, but with Christ, whose whole life was nothing but affliction. These spiritual martyrs, though in the sight of the world they are of all men most miserable, and seem to be forsaken and cast off by God; yet are, in truth, the richest

towards God. In their own opinion they are, indeed, at the same time, the most unfaithful to him; though in reality they have the firmest faith, and most ardent zeal for his honor and service, and upon that account undergo these heavy sufferings. From this faith and love towards God (of which they themselves are ignorant), it arises, that they are tormented with divers temptations to which they will not consent, so that even death itself would not be so bitter to them, as the anguish they feel upon that account. They labor with their utmost strength to amend their lives, and practise every Christian virtue; and when they find their labor to be in vain, they relapse into the old sense of their infirmities, attended with the most exquisite pain of mind. All this, they suffer from a principle of love towards God; esteeming themselves the worst of all men, though they are most precious in the sight of God.

21. No wiser counsel can be given to these than that, with humble patience and resignation they bear the troubles which they cannot help, and which are but aggravated by impatience. After this dark night of unspeakable affliction, the Sun of righteousness shall arise, refreshing and filling their hearts with inexpressible light and glory.

CHAPTER LIV.

COMFORTS UNDER SECRET AND SPIRITUAL TEMPTATIONS OF THE DEVIL.

Behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not; and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.—LUKE 22: 31, 32.

HOW great and implacable the enmity of the devil is to all mankind, we are abundantly informed, not only by Scripture (as 1 Pet. 5: 8, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." Eph. 6: 12, and Rev. 12: 12, "Woe to the earth, and to the sea, for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time;" and from the history of Job), but also more particularly by daily experience, and the many grievous and dangerous temptations with which he assaults the souls of good men in their spiritual warfare. At one time he assaults our faith, at another time our Christian calling, and then interrupts and disturbs us in the exercise of our devotions; all which is clearly expressed in the history of our Lord's temptation. Matt. 4: 3, etc. Hence we may learn that no man is safe from his temptations. For if he spared not Christ our Head, how can sinful men expect to escape him? For which reason our Lord himself advises us, "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." Matt. 26: 41.

2. Among the various temptations with which the devil afflicts the soul, this is one, namely, the tormenting a man with blasphemous, profane, impure, and troublesome thoughts, so as

to sink him deep into melancholy and wretchedness. And these abominable suggestions are so crafty, sudden, and violent, that they will not give a man a moment's rest. Upon this account St. Paul calls them, "the fiery darts of the wicked one." Eph. 6 : 16. As a public enemy is perpetually casting fire into a besieged town; so the devil is continually vexing such souls with his hellish suggestions. And as the wounds of an envenomed arrow are most exquisitely painful; so the wounds caused by the fiery darts of Satan, are far more sharp and intolerable than the severest bodily sufferings. Wherefore we shall here present some select heads of comfort against these secret and internal temptations, all drawn from the Word of God. *First*, as to the words prefixed to this chapter, it is plain that they were uttered by our blessed Saviour, with the utmost tenderness, and most ardent compassion. Whence we may gather, that the being afflicted with these temptations, is no mark of God's displeasure, much less that he designs to destroy us thereby, and deliver us up into the hands of the enemy. On the contrary, such a temptation is nothing but a chastising rod, whereby God intends to humble a man, and to draw him to Himself. This appears from the example of St. Peter, whose confidence and self-conceit opened a door to the most grievous temptation, and to the sin which followed. And St. Paul tells us of himself, "Lest I should be exalted (saith he) above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee." 2 Cor. 12 : 7–9. From which words we may learn three things: 1. That St. Paul, and all others that are exercised with these trials, are humbled thereby. 2. That all those sufferings come upon us by the counsel of God. 3. That the utmost fury of the devil against a man who is so tempted, cannot exclude him from God's favor, which is expressed in these words, "My grace is sufficient for thee."

3. The *second* ground of comfort is contained in these words: "Satan hath desired you." From these words we may learn, that though the devil is always desirous and ready to cast his fiery darts at us, yet has he no power without the particular leave and permission of God; who never gives him more than a limited permission, beyond which he cannot go. To this belongs that place of St. Paul, "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able." 1 Cor. 10 : 13. To which we may add the example of Job, against whom the devil dared not attempt anything, till he had first obtained leave of God; and even that clogged with a limitation. See chap. 1 : 12.

4. The *third* consolation arises from these words of our Lord: "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." In what manner, and with what affection the blessed Jesus prayed for us to his Heavenly Father, we are told in John (chapter 17), namely, that He would be pleased to keep his faithful servants from the evil of the world; that he would dwell in them, and they in him; and that of those whom he had received of his Father, he might lose none. This prayer, were it but heartily applied to the distressed soul, would support it with a divine courage so as to abide in Christ by faith, not doubting but that Christ in her, by the

same faith, would conquer and triumph over all her enemies.

5. The *fourth* comfort may be drawn from John 17 : 21, where our blessed Lord prays for us, and begs of his heavenly Father, that we may abide in Christ, and Christ in us. And St. John tells us, that "greater is he that is in us, than he that is in the world." 1 John 4 : 4. Christ dwells in every believing soul by faith; and all the assaults of the devil cannot dispossess this illustrious guest. And as Christ himself, in whom God himself, that is, all "the fulness of the Godhead dwelt bodily" and personally (Col. 2 : 9), was tempted by Satan, thou must not, therefore, think that Christ is not in thee, because thou thyself art likewise tempted. And if Christ be in thee of a truth, thou needest not fear what the devil can do unto thee: for Christ will certainly defend the place of his own residence, against all opposers. Moreover, thou hast within thee the Holy Spirit, who "helpeth thine infirmities, and maketh intercession for thee with groanings that cannot be uttered." Rom. 8 : 26. Whensoever thou findest these within thee, thou mayest assure thyself, that the Holy Spirit dwelleth in thee, and he will not forsake thee, as our blessed Lord assures us: "The Father shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever." John 14 : 16. Lastly, God has promised, that he will dwell in the humble and contrite heart: "I dwell with him that is of a contrite and humble spirit." Isa. 57 : 15; 66 : 2. And such, undoubtedly, are all those who are tormented with these temptations of Satan.

6. The *fifth* ground of comfort, is contained in our Saviour's promise: "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." O divine comfort! as if our Lord had said: "Your infirmities shall never be so great, but that there shall be some sparks of faith left. Yea, though you feel in yourselves no comfort, and, on that account, are apt to think your faith quite extinct, yet will I never suffer the smoking flax to be entirely quenched." Isa. 42 : 3. But, now, if you ask, How shall I know this? I answer, 1. By the earnest longing of your soul after faith. For, to desire and pray for faith above all other things, arises from a living spark of remaining faith. 2. By your resistance of temptation, which is a certain token of the presence of faith; and this resistance and opposition appear plainly in this, that all these wicked and blasphemous thoughts arise in your soul sorely against your will, and that you bear them with more pain, than you would any external violence offered to your body. Now whatsoever a man suffers of this kind against his will, is resisted by faith, and shall never be imputed to him as sin; for nothing but a voluntary violation of the divine law, makes a man sinful in the sight of God. If Adam had not yielded to the suggestions of Satan, he had not had sin; but as soon as he submitted his will to that of the tempter, he fell into the transgression. Whence it follows, that it cannot be sin, which is not attended with the consent of the will. A besieged city cannot hinder the enemy from throwing fire into it, but the inhabitants must endeavor to prevent it from spreading, and burning the town to ashes. So we cannot avoid the fiery darts of the devil, with which he delights to afflict the heart; but as we do not consent to them, but rather resist, they must at last be quenched, and can do us no harm. By such tokens as these we may discover, that

our faith, however weak, is not extinct.

7. Being once assured of this, we may likewise certainly depend upon victory; and this opens to us a *sixth* fountain of comfort. To this, therefore, refers that comfortable saying of our Saviour: "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me." John 14 : 30. "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." John 16 : 33. Whatsoever Christ did, he did for our sakes; that he himself, with all his benefits and merits, might be entirely ours. Since, therefore, he has conquered Satan, it follows that he has conquered him not only for himself, but for us also: his conquest is ours. All this was prefigured in the contest between David and Goliath. 1 Sam. 17 : 8, 9, 50–53. The conditions were, that if Goliath overcame David, the people of Israel should be the servants of the Philistines; but if David overcame Goliath, the Philistines should serve Israel. Now, even as David's victory was counted as the victory of all Israel, so the victory of Christ avails as the victory of all believers. Hence St. Paul says: "Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might." Eph. 6 : 10. And, "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Cor. 15 : 57.

8. *Seventhly*, we ought to be comforted by the examples of the saints, who have also been cruelly tempted. Of these our blessed Saviour speaks, saying, "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." By these words, our Saviour plainly sends us to be instructed by the examples of our brethren, who have been tempted and persecuted by the devil in like manner with us. Hence St. Peter says: "Knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world." 1 Peter 5 : 9.

9. *Lastly*, we ought to be comforted by the example of Jesus Christ himself. Matt. 4 : 1, etc. Over him, though he was the beloved Son of God, the devil had so much power, as to hurry him from place to place, and use him with so much insolence, that it is wonderful the Son of God should suffer it from that rebellious, apostate spirit. But this was the condition of the humble Jesus, who emptied himself of all his glory and majesty, that he might be tempted as man, and be made like unto his brethren.

CHAPTER LV.

THE REASONS FOR WHICH GOD SOMETIMES DELAYS HIS COMFORT AND ASSISTANCE.

For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie; though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry. Behold, his soul which is lifted up, is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith.—HAB. 2 : 3, 4.

IN these words the Holy Spirit comforts us, under the *delays* of Divine assistance: for so we are apt to call (1) those very methods by which God hastens to help and save us. He has, in his unsearchable wisdom, appointed to every man his cross in weight and measure. He delivers it out to him in meet proportions, sending one affliction after another, till the measure of his sufferings be accomplished; that so, by a gradual conquest, he may at last obtain a complete victory. This dealing of God with us, we are apt to call *his delaying* to help us; not considering that this is the quickest method of accomplishing the measure of our sufferings, and completing our victory. That which to us seems to be delay, is in the sight of God, *making haste to help us.*

2. Now he that is refractory and impatient under the cross, has no peace in his soul. For as patience renders the soul easy and quiet, so impatience makes it restless and uneasy. Thus our Lord tells us, "Learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls." Matt. 11 : 29. And, whereas, the prophet adds, that "the just shall live by his faith;" this relates to the promises of divine grace and assistance, which we lay hold on by faith. And from this consolation the soul derives life and joy; as Hezekiah says: "O Lord, by these things men live, and in all these things is the life of my spirit." Isa. 38 : 16. On the other hand, unbelief produces impatience; impatience, disquiet; disquiet, despair; and despair, everlasting death. So that we may most truly say, that "the just lives by faith;" that is, by the grace of God, which he patiently expects and waits for.

3. (2) Solomon tells us: "To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven." Eccles. 3 : 1. Whence we may learn, that crosses and afflictions come not by chance; but that every season of affliction is appointed to us by God. Wherefore, in our troubles let us lift up our eyes unto Him, in whose hand are our happiness and misery, our riches and poverty, our life and death; yea, and every moment of our afflictions. This is illustrated in the case of Joseph, whom, for thirteen years together, God visited with remarkable afflictions (Gen. 37 : 36; 41 : 1): "until the time that his word came: the word of the Lord tried him," as the Psalmist tells us. Ps. 105 : 19. By his example we may learn how useful and necessary it is for us that God should sometimes delay his help. For when he was sold, he was seventeen years old; and when, by the hand of God he was brought out of prison, he was thirty; and the bearing of his

cross all that season, was the very thing that qualified him for the glorious advancement that followed. In that honorable post he continued eighty years; whence we may observe, that his thirteen years of suffering, were recompensed with many years of glory and honor: for he lived a hundred and ten years. Therefore let the devout Christian that suffers imprisonment or any kind of persecution for the testimony of a good conscience, or shame, or sickness, call to mind the wonderful providence of God to Joseph, and satisfy himself that the all-wise God, who has appointed his season of affliction, has likewise determined the set time of his deliverance. For as a skilful builder knows well by what time his laborers will have finished their task, so has God measured out the weight and duration of every man's cross, and appointed the season of his deliverance. As soon as that comes, the light of divine grace will immediately break forth, and will comfort the afflicted soul.

4. (3) As God has determined the number of our crosses; so He has been pleased to conceal from us the time of our deliverance, satisfying us with that declaration of our blessed Lord, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power." Acts 1: 7. Agreeably to this are the words of God, who when he had threatened the children of Israel with the Babylonish captivity, adds, "Is not this laid up in store with me, and sealed up among my treasures?" Deut. 32: 34. Thence we may learn, with what great and unsearchable wisdom God governs and corrects the children of men. To this also may be referred that saying of St. Paul: "God hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation." Acts 17: 26. In these words we are instructed, that not only the period of every man's life, but even the place and manner of it, are appointed by God. And this general determination of time and place, includes in it the crosses and afflictions appointed to every person.

5. (4) And as God has appointed the period, time, and place, of the sufferings of his servants; so has He also of the persecutions and oppressions of the wicked. When these have for a season been breathing out oppressions and slaughter, then that God to whom vengeance belongeth, awaketh and riseth to judgment; according to Deut. 32: 35: "To me belongeth vengeance and recompense; their foot shall slide in due time: for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them, make haste." This is abundantly confirmed by the examples of heretics and tyrants that have most grievously persecuted the church of God; and when the devil has raged long enough, and his time is expired, then has the divine vengeance so confounded him and all his accomplices, that the whole world has been amazed and astonished at the righteous judgments of God. "Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts; for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold the Judge standeth before the door." Jas. 5: 8, 9.

CHAPTER LVI.

SHOWING THAT IN SEASONS OF TRIAL THE CONSIDERATION OF THE EXALTED PATIENCE OF CHRIST, AND OF THE FUTURE AND ETERNAL GLORY, WILL ALLEVIATE THE BURDEN OF THE CROSS.

Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?—LUKE 24: 26.

THE eternal Son of God, by his most holy incarnation, took upon him all the miseries and calamities of mankind: and this not of compulsion and necessity, but of pure love, that by his example he might teach us patience, and enable us to bear the cross, and overcome the calamities of this mortal life. As he was to become man, so he willingly subjected himself to all those miseries to which man is exposed; and as he came down from heaven for the sake of all, so he took upon him the infirmities of all; so that from the moment of his birth, to the hour of his death, he was, as the prophet truly expresses it, "despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." Isa. 53: 3. There was no calamity incident to human nature, which he did not suffer, and, particularly, extreme poverty. He says of himself, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." Matt. 8: 20. In the discharge of his office, he underwent the most bitter persecutions, being exposed to hatred, calumnies, and reproaches. In his last days he submitted to the most ignominious sufferings, so that, as the prophet expresses it, "We did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted." Isa. 53: 4. His transcendent love met with the highest ingratitude, his illustrious miracles were rewarded with revilings, and his heavenly doctrines with calumnies and lies. And since our blessed Lord suffered all this, why shall we expect to be exempted from sufferings and injuries?

2. Thus the blessed Jesus, by his example, has shown us the true and only path to heaven. 1 Pet. 2: 21. Let us therefore tread in his steps, and learn to imitate him in all the different scenes of his most holy and afflicted life. He went before, that we might in holy patience follow him. Whence we may learn, how far they are from the true and right way, who never regard this blessed pattern, but refuse to follow it. If men will still walk on in darkness and shut their eyes against this light, how great must their darkness be! The blessed Jesus himself calls to them, saying, "I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." John 8: 12.

3. All the sufferings of true Christians in this life, are not worthy to be compared with the eternal glories reserved for them in the world to come; for their temporal afflictions are but for a moment, but their glorious reward shall endure forever. 2 Cor. 4: 17, 18. An everlasting possession is well worth contending for. Couldest thou but for a moment behold what eternal glories they enjoy, who in this life were exposed to all torments and sufferings, thou wouldest cheerfully submit to them all, and take up thy cross with joy; thinking all things

but as dross, that thou mightest win Christ and be a partaker of his glory.

4. Lift up, therefore, the eyes of thy mind to heaven, and view, with St. John, that vast company clothed in white garments, and following the Lamb, concerning whom this account is given to the inquiring Evangelist: "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple." Rev. 7 : 14, 15. Such are the proper meditations for devout souls. Thus we read of Moses, "By faith, Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he had respect to the recompense of the reward." Heb. 11 : 24–26.

5. Hence we learn that the saints in all ages have esteemed the reproach of the cross of Christ as their greatest treasure. And we may depend upon it, that no man can be admitted to the joys of the next world, who has not fought manfully under the banner of the cross in this world. How can we imagine that those blessed spirits will own us to be of their company in heaven, if we did not bring with us the sign of the cross? They would not know us, and we would be strangers among them. "He that overcometh," saith the Lord, "the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life." Rev. 3 : 5. And what does St. Paul say? "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." 2 Tim. 4 : 7, 8.

CHAPTER LVII.

CONSOLATIONS AGAINST THE FEARS OF DEATH.

Christ hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.—2 Tim. 1 : 10.

THIS sentence is full of divine comfort against the fears of temporal death. For if "Christ hath abolished death," why should we fear it? And if "life and immortality be brought to light," why should we not rejoice to pass through the gates of death, to take possession of them? But since there is no man so holy, but that at some time or other he is afraid of death, I shall here subjoin the chief heads of consolation, which I shall divide into two parts. The first contains those consolations which arise from *Christ's sufferings and death, and the fruits of them.* The second, those that arise from the consideration of *the vanity of the world.* Each of these parts shall comprehend seven arguments of comfort.

2. I. The first and most powerful remedy against the fear of death, is the most holy and innocent death of Jesus Christ, by which he destroyed the power of death. The power of death consists in the continual dread, anxiety, terror, and trembling that arise from the thought of the severe judgment that is to follow. With this the soul is oftentimes so afflicted, that it is, as it were, continually dying, yet cannot die. This is the power of death, yea, is even the second and eternal death: and this terrible state the devil makes yet more dreadful by his suggestions. Upon this account he is said "to have the power of death" (Heb. 2 : 14); that is, to terrify and torment the conscience with hellish fears and terrors. This was David's case, as he complains, "My heart is sore pained within me; and the terrors of death are fallen upon me." Ps. 55 : 4. So again, "The sorrows of death compassed me, and the floods of ungodly men made me afraid." Ps. 18 : 3, 4. Now the blessed Jesus has taken away this power of death, changing it into a calm sleep, a blessed rest of soul and body. When the soul is at rest, the body sleeps peacefully, so that the peace of the soul gives peace also to the body. Hence every true and faithful Christian may be properly said not to taste of death; according to that promise of our blessed Lord, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my sayings, he shall never see death." John 8 : 51.

3. The second ground of comfort is, the resurrection of our bodies. For Christ has so far destroyed the power of death, that it not only cannot torment our souls, but cannot even keep our bodies perpetually. As the power of Christ's death in us protects us from tasting the bitterness of it; so, by the power of his resurrection, our mortal bodies shall also be raised again to a glorious immortality.

4. For (1), the foundation of our resurrection is the resurrection of Jesus Christ, as he himself says, "Because I live, ye shall live also." John 14 : 19. "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." John 11 : 25. "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God." Job 19 : 25. "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." 1 Cor. 15 : 21, 22.

5. (2) This is also founded upon God's veracity. "Thy dead men shall live." Isa. 26 : 19. "Thus saith the Lord God unto these bones: Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live. Behold, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, O my people." Ezek. 37 : 5, 12. "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." Dan. 12 : 2. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. The hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." John 5 : 25, 28, 29. "And I saw the dead, both small and great, stand before God." Rev. 20 : 12.

6. (3) It is also founded upon the

omnipotence and glory of Jesus Christ. As in the resurrection of Lazarus, he was glorified, when he cried out, "Lazarus, come forth" (John 11 : 43); so will he also, in the last great day, manifest his power and glory, by showing himself to be the Lord of the dead and living. Rom. 14 : 9. "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death; O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction." Hosea 13 : 14.

7. (4) The divine justice is also engaged for the confirmation of this truth. As it has received fulfilment in that sentence, "Thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2 : 17); so also must it be fulfilled in our resurrection after a complete satisfaction for sin. For when sin itself is at an end, the wages of sin ought to have an end likewise. This is strictly agreeable to the justice of God.

8. (5) This is also further confirmed to us by the examples of those who have been already raised from death unto life. Such was the case of the widow's son (1 Kings 17 : 22); the Shunammite's son (2 Kings 4 : 35–37); the dead body that was raised by touching the bones of Elisha (2 Kings 13 : 21); the daughter of Jairus (Matt. 9 : 25); the widow's son at Nain (Luke 7 : 15); Lazarus (John 11 : 43); and Tabitha (Acts 9 : 41).

9. (6) Christ hath redeemed both soul and body to everlasting life.

10. (7) The beautiful parables derived from nature, as the grain of wheat, in John 12 : 24, claim attention. The apostle says: "Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die," etc. 1 Cor. 15 : 36, etc. Upon this account, burying-places are, in the German tongue, called *God's fields* (*Gottesacker*).

11. A third comfort against the fears of death is, the fruit of Christ's resurrection; that is, that eternal, incorruptible, and immortal state purchased for us by Jesus Christ. For as by the transgression of the first Adam, all his posterity were made subject to death; so by the obedience of the second, all are restored to life and immortality. Upon which account it is said, "Behold, I make all things new." Rev. 21 : 5. This renovation consists in an entire freedom from sin, misery, and death, and is a state of righteousness, joy, and eternal life. For this cause it is also called Paradise: "In thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." Ps. 16 : 11. If it be Paradise, it follows, that no grief, pain, sorrow, or sighing: no hunger, thirst, cold, heat, or any other evil, can enter there. These all belong to this transitory life, but that eternal life is "an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away;" as we are told by St. Peter. (1 Peter 1 : 4.) This is, indeed, the glorious fruit of Christ's resurrection: for by Christ all things are renewed and restored; corruption is changed into incorruption; that which was transitory, into that which is eternal; our filthiness, into spotless purity; our grief, into joy; our sorrows, into triumphs; our sins, into righteousness; the divine anger into mercy; the curse into blessings; our poverty into riches; our diseases into health; our contempt into honor; our reproach into glory; our disquiet into everlasting rest; our miseries into pleasures; our death into life. Now death is the entrance into this blessed state: so that temporal death is the gate to everlasting life, and all these joys.

12. The fourth consolation against the fear of death, is prayer. So we

read of the Son of God, that "being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly." Luke 22 : 44. And "in the days of his flesh, he offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared." Heb. 5 : 7. Indeed, the prayers of dying people are strong and earnest; they proceed from the bottom of the heart, ascend through the clouds, and reach the ears of the Almighty. "The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth." Ps. 145 : 18. "I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honor him." Ps. 91 : 15. "Fear thou not, for I am with thee; I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." Isa. 41 : 10.

13. The fifth consolation is, the glorification of our bodies. "Our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working, whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself." Phil. 3 : 20, 21. What greater glory can we conceive, than that our bodies shall be, like the glorified body of Jesus Christ? He showed us his glorified body upon Mount Tabor (Matt. 17 : 2; Mark 9 : 2, 3), that he might inflame us with a desire of the same glory. Oh! what a glorious temple of God shall our body then be! Of this, the royal and priestly garments under the law, were but a faint shadow and resemblance.

14. The sixth is, the presence of the holy angels, who carry our departing souls into Abraham's bosom. Our soul enters into the regions of eternal glory, and joins the society of blessed spirits. This is what is meant by "Abraham's bosom." Luke 16 : 22. That rest of the soul consists entirely in a freedom from the fears and terrors of death. So "Return unto thy rest, O my soul. For the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee: for thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling. I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living." Ps. 116 : 7–9. For then the soul, being delivered from the yoke of the flesh, will rejoice like a prisoner rescued from long captivity.

15. The seventh comfort is, the eternal duration of our future glory. "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, or any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." Rev. 7 : 16, 17. "My people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting-places." Isa. 32 : 18. And "I will extend peace to her like a river. And as one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you." Isa. 66 : 12, 13. "My servants shall eat, and drink, and rejoice." Isa. 65 : 13. Such eating and drinking, are to be understood of their exalted pleasure, arising from their vision of God, "Now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face." 1 Cor. 13 : 12. "We shall see him as he is." 1 John 3 : 2. "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness." Ps. 17 : 15. O happy day, when we shall see God face to face! How ardently did holy David long for it, saying, "When shall I come and appear before God?" Ps. 42 : 2.

16. In short, the joy of eternal life

will consist: 1. In the beatific vision of the face of God. 2. In the presence of Christ our Redeemer, in all his glory and majesty: "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me." John 17 : 24. 3. In the most exalted enjoyments of all the gifts, graces, and pleasures of the Holy Ghost, "the fountain of life." Ps. 36 : 9. 4. In the society of all the Elect, Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, and Martyrs. "And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." Isa. 35 : 10.

17. II. Thus much for those consolations that arise from the nature, offices, and promises of the blessed Jesus. I come now to consider those that may be drawn from the consideration of the vanity of the world. Of these there are also seven.

18. First, this life, how great and glorious soever it may appear to some, is made up of misery and sorrow. 1 Cor. 15 : 31. Every day steals away a part of our life, and as our years increase, our life decreases; so that every moment of our time is divided betwixt life and death. How many and various diseases are there, which, like slow poisons, waste and consume our bodies! How are we tormented with sorrow, broken with labors, and distracted with care! So that the wise man truly pronounced that "the day of death is better than the day of one's birth." Eccles. 7 : 1. "Is there not an appointed time to man upon earth? Are not his days also like the days of a hireling? As a servant earnestly desireth the shadow, and as a hireling looketh for the reward of his work: so am I made to possess months of vanity, and wearisome nights are appointed to me." Job 7 : 1–3. "Man that is born of a woman, is of few days and full of trouble." Job 14 : 1. But a holy and happy death puts an end to all these miseries.

19. Secondly, we are exposed to many and very grievous sins, from which nothing can deliver us but a happy death. Thus St. Paul complains, "I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Rom. 7 : 23, 24. What is life but a continued course of sin? So that it was a prayer of one of the ancients, "Lord, let me die, that I may cease from sin." And if the whole creation is travailing in pain, and waiting to be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God (Rom. 8 : 21, 22), how much more ought we to sigh after it? How full the world is of offences and stumbling-blocks, which we are continually obliged to see and suffer, whether we will or not! And these offences will so increase in the last days, that the souls of the righteous shall be vexed like righteous Lot's in Sodom. 2 Pet. 2 : 8. "I returned, and considered all the oppressions that are done under the sun; and behold, the tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no comforter; and on the side of their oppressors there was power; but they had no comforter. Wherefore, I praised the dead which are already dead, more than the living which are yet alive." Eccles. 4 : 1, 2. How many pestilent errors in matters of faith; how many heresies, superstitions, false

prophets and false Christs there are, so that, if it were possible, even the elect might be deceived! Matt. 24 : 24. Upon this account God takes his faithful people out of all these dangers and troubles. How many dreadful mischiefs, and mournful events, how many wars, butcheries, plagues, and famines occur! Such, and so great, are they, that indeed no Christian would wish to see or endure them.

20. Thirdly, all must die without distinction. "Death hath passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Rom. 5 : 12. Since so many holy and excellent men, so many Patriarchs, Prophets, and so many other righteous men are dead, who would not willingly follow them? "Take away my life, for I am not better than my fathers" (1 Kings 19 : 4), said the prophet Elijah. "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." Heb. 9 : 27. "All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth; because the spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it." Isa. 40 : 6, 7. "I am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were." Ps. 39 : 12.

21. Fourthly, no man dies by chance; but God is the Lord of life, and he has appointed the bounds of its duration. "His days are determined, the number of his months are with thee." Job 14 : 5. "Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return, ye children of men." Ps. 90 : 3. "In thy book all my members were written." Ps. 139 : 16. "The very hairs of your head are all numbered." Matt. 10 : 30. "God is thy life, and the length of thy days." Deut. 30 : 20.

22. Fifthly, "To die is gain." Phil. 1 : 21. We gain more than we lose by dying; righteousness, instead of sin; glory, for misery; heavenly riches, for earthly; instead of the short-lived friendships and relations of this world, we gain an eternal fellowship and union with the saints in heaven; instead of this mortal, diseased, and frail body, we gain a heavenly and glorious one; we change banishment for our own country; misery, for peace; and this world for heaven. In short, what is there in this world, that we cannot have infinitely better in the next? If thou seekest riches, honors, or glory; with friends, pleasures, peace, or enjoyments, all these thou shalt enjoy in a far higher degree in the next world.

23. Sixthly, Man would be the most miserable creature in the world, if he were obliged to abide in it forever. "If in this life only," saith St. Paul, "we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." 1 Cor. 15 : 19. It follows, therefore, that we are designed for a better world. So that, in truth, it is a very affecting instance of divine mercy to take us out of this valley of tears, and translate us to a better place. "The righteous is taken away from the evil to come. He shall enter into peace; they shall rest in their beds, each one walking in his uprightness." Isa. 57 : 1, 2. "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors." Rev. 14 : 13.

24. Seventhly, since we cannot with these bodily and sinful eyes behold the glory of God, nor enter with these mortal bodies into the "new heavens and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Peter 3 : 13); let us cheerfully put off this earthly tabernacle, that we may be clothed with a heavenly and spiritual body. 1 Cor. 15 : 44. "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither

doth corruption inherit incorruption." 1 Cor. 15 : 50. Great, therefore, is the mercy of God, who exchanges these filthy rags for a shining garment, in which we may celebrate the eternal marriage; a beautiful, festive garment, fit to be worn in the everlasting rest; a priestly robe, with which we may enter into the very holy of holies.

CONCLUSION OF THE SECOND BOOK.

At the close of this Book, I desire to submit one or two points to the consideration of the Christian reader.

In writing these Books I have had no other object in view than that, in connection with our pure religion and confession of faith, as set forth in the Church of the Augsburg Confession, and repeated in the Formula of Concord (which I publicly and sincerely adopt, and in accordance with which I desire these writings of mine to be understood), purity and holiness of the life might be promoted. For purity of doctrine is of no benefit, when it is not adorned by a holy life. We ought to guard the purity of doctrine with watchful eyes, but sustain holiness of life with even greater earnestness. Of what advantage are great skill and learning without godliness? It is much better, in the eyes of God, to train up a devout man, than to make a learned man of him. There are many who teach the *doctrine* of Christ with great zeal, but there are few who in their practice conform to his *life*. As to this point the Christian reader is referred to the Preface of the First Book, and to the Conclusion of the Fourth Book.

2. If any one should allege that I have treated too diffusely of the doctrine of Christian faith, I beg to give the following answer: Our evil life is also very extensive—the evils under which we labor are very serious—our redemption is a great work—and our crosses are manifold. But let any one who desires greater brevity, read the several chapters in the First, Second, and Third Books, which treat of Repentance, Faith, Love, Humility, Meekness, Patience, and the Cross, and he will find the whole Christian life described without prolixity. Nevertheless, if thou wilt read the whole work, thou wilt be abundantly rewarded for the time and labor which thou hast thus expended.

PREFACE TO THE THIRD BOOK.

AS there are different degrees of age and maturity in the natural life; so are there also in the spiritual. This life has its first foundation in sincere repentance, by which a man sets himself heartily to amend his life. This is succeeded by an increase of light, when by contemplation, prayer, and bearing the cross, a man is daily improving in grace, and growing up to perfection. The last and most perfect state is that which consists in firm union, which is founded in, and cemented by, pure love. This is the state which St. Paul calls the "perfect man," and "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Eph. 4 : 13.

2. To explain these three different states, is the design of these three books; so that I think that (with my Book of Prayer), the whole body of Christianity is contained and explained in them, as far as is essentially necessary; though, perhaps, not so perfectly as might be wished. As for the Fourth Book, I thought fit to add it to the rest, to show how harmoniously the Holy Scriptures, Jesus Christ, human nature, and the whole creation agree together; and how all things centre in the one Eternal, which is God!

3. That the reader may not mistake the design of this Third Book, I would remark that it proposes to instruct him how to seek and find the kingdom of heaven within himself (Luke 17 : 21); and that, in order to this, he must devote and consecrate his whole heart and soul to God; that is, not only his understanding, but his will and affections also. It is a notion too prevalent at this day, that men are very good Christians, if by reading or discourse they have attained to some kind of intellectual knowledge of Jesus Christ. This is that which generally passes under the name of Divinity, which the generality take to be nothing but a science, or a set of doctrines or opinions to be learned only in theory, not regarding the other most noble powers of the soul, namely, the will and the affections. But *all* these must be consecrated to God in Christ; and when thou hast done this, thou mayest assure thyself that thou art entirely dedicated to him. For there is a wide difference betwixt the understanding by which we know, and the will or affections by which we love the Lord Jesus. Our love may be perfect, though our knowledge be not so. To know Christ with our understanding, and yet not to love him, is nothing worth; on the other hand, it is infinitely better to love him, than merely to be able to dispute and discourse about him. Eph. 3 : 19. Let us learn, therefore, so to seek Christ with our understanding, that we may also love him with the entire strength of our will. By this we may be assured that we know him truly, if our knowledge be productive of love. Otherwise, we may be said, indeed, to find him and

know him, but it will be to our condemnation. So our blessed Lord tells us, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven." Matt. 7 : 21. Moreover, there are two ways of obtaining wisdom and knowledge. The one consists in reading and discussion; the other in prayer and charity. The one makes us learned, the other holy. And between these there is a great difference. If men be learned, and not lovers of God, they breathe nothing but pride and arrogance; but if holy, they are humble, and think meanly of themselves. If thou take the first method, thou wilt never find thy internal treasure; if thou take the latter, thou canst not be disappointed. Such is the argument of the Third Book.

4. And now, how glorious, how noble, and happy a thing is it, that our chief and most valuable treasure, that is, the kingdom of God, is not to be sought *without*, but to be found *within* us, that we continually carry it about with us, hidden from the world, and that neither the world nor the devil can rob us of it; and that this is not to be obtained by profound learning, skill in languages, or variety of books, but by a devout and humble spirit. Here then let us exercise our greatest care and diligence, and turn our thoughts inward to that hidden, celestial, and eternal good, that divine, that incomparable treasure. Why do we spend our time and pains in the pursuit of external comforts, whilst so great a treasure as the kingdom of God, with all its blessings, lies within us? For in our heart and soul is the true school of the Holy Spirit, the true habitation of the Holy Trinity, the very temple of God (1 Cor. 6 : 19), the true house of prayer, wherein he desires to be worshipped "in spirit and in truth." John 4 : 23, 24. For though God by his universal presence is in all things, though not included in them (Isa. 66 : 1), but after an incomprehensible manner filling heaven and earth; yet in a particular and proper sense, he dwells in the soul of the enlightened Christian, taking up his seat and habitation there, as it were in his own image and similitude. Here he operates in a way suitable to himself, answering and aiding every groan and sigh of the devout soul. For how is it possible that He should deny anything to him with whom, and in whom he lives? In a word, there is nothing more pleasant and agreeable to divine love, than to communicate itself to all that unfeignedly seek it.

5. In order to this, however, the soul must be at rest, which it never can be till disengaged from the world. This even some heathens were sensible of, and accordingly one of them tells us, "that the soul is incapable of wisdom till it is composed and at rest." There is a fine passage in St. Cyprian to this purpose. "This," says he, "is the true rest and security of the soul, when the man, being delivered from the storms and tempests of the world, raises his heart and eyes unto God, and endeavors to be like him. By this he comes to understand, that all which the world calls beautiful and valuable, is truly hidden in his own soul, so that he neither expects nor desires anything from without. O celestial treasure, to be delivered from the chains and fetters of this world! O chief and boundless good, not to be obtained by any labor of ours, nor by our interest with the great men of this world; in short, not to be gained by our industry and study; but solely and entirely, by the grace and favor of God. For as

the light of the sun proceeds from itself, the day breaks from itself, the fountain flows from itself, the rain falls from itself, and waters the earth; so the Holy Spirit descends freely into that soul, which has raised itself from the world unto God."

6. These words of St. Cyprian express a great truth, and are a sort of epitome of this Book. In a word, this turning inwards of the soul, very often gives us a view of the inward treasure of our souls, though but for a moment. And one such moment is better than heaven and earth, and all the creatures. Hence St. Bernard truly observed, "that he who has once learned to descend into himself, to seek the face of God, and taste the sweetness of his presence in the inmost recesses of the heart, will think it more tolerable to suffer even the pains of hell for a season, than, after having tasted the sweetness of this divine exercise, to return again to the pleasures, or rather, to the lusts and wearisome gratifications of the world and the flesh, arising from the insatiable cravings of the inferior appetites." In short, such a soul not only feels the highest happiness, by finding in itself the presence of God; but also the deepest misery, in being deprived of it. By this the true Christian is fully instructed, that by dying to the world, he lives in God, as the fountain of life; and, on the other hand, that the more he lives to the world, the more he dies unto God: that the soul which is dead to the world, truly lives unto God, and is his joy, or, as the Song of Solomon expresses it, is better than the taste of wine, or the smell of all spices (Cant. 4: 10); while on the other hand, the hearts of worldly men are but sour grapes, as the grapes of Sodom, which are as gall, and their clusters are bitter. Deut. 32: 32. The soul that is dead to the world, may be discovered by these tokens. It resigns its own will to the will of God in all things; it suppresses self-love; it mortifies the desires of the flesh; it avoids worldly pleasures; it esteems itself as the meanest of all, and is not apt to judge or censure a neighbor. Such a one refers all his injuries and wrongs to the God of righteousness, to whom vengeance belongeth; he is not puffed up with the applause of men, nor grieved by their revilings; in a word, he bears everything with patience and without repining. A noble instance of this resigned temper we have in king David (2 Sam. 23: 15–17), when he poured out before the Lord the water of the well of Bethlehem, after which he had so earnestly longed, and which three mighty men of his host had brought for him at the hazard of their lives. This was an action of great self-denial; for he would not gratify his desires by tasting that for which three men had ventured their lives.

7. Herein consists the true perfection of the Christian life. For perfection is not, as some suppose, a sublime, spiritual kind of relish for heavenly enjoyments; but it is the denying our own will, the contempt of the pleasures and profits of this life, the acknowledging our own vileness, constant resignation to the will of God, and unwearied love and unfeigned compassion for our neighbor. In a word, it is that degree of love, which, allowing for human infirmities, thinks of nothing, seeks nothing, desires nothing but God. This is that true Christian virtue, true liberty, and true peace, which consists in overcoming the flesh and fleshly desires, as will appear in this Third Book, and as thou wilt learn from thine own experience,

if thou wilt apply the truth. For which great end, I pray that divine grace may descend both upon the reader and writer, that it may please God to begin, strengthen, and perfect his good work in us, to the praise and glory of himself. Amen.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER I.

OF THE GREAT INTERNAL TREASURE OF AN ENLIGHTENED BELIEVER.

Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God?
1 Cor. 6 : 19.

THAT the hearts of believers are the habitation of the Holy Trinity, is largely attested in Scripture, as Lev. 26 : 11; Isa. 44 : 3; 57 : 15; Joel 2 : 27; John 14 : 23; 17 : 23; Rom. 8 : 9–11; 1 Cor. 2 : 11, 12; 3 : 16; 6 : 19; 2 Cor. 6 : 16; Gal. 2 : 20; Ephes. 3 : 17; 4 : 24; Col. 3 : 10; 1 John 4 : 13. But who is there among Christians that understands, values, or inquires after this immense and hidden treasure? I thought it desirable, therefore, to explain at large the spiritual and heavenly dignity of the true Christian, and to show every one how to seek and find this sublime treasure in himself. The foundation of this doctrine has been already laid down in Book I, proving how the Word of God, through faith, exerts its power in the heart of man. And in Book II, it has been shown how God discovers himself to the devout soul, as the highest love, goodness, beauty, holiness, and wisdom.

2. But as this high treasure cannot be worthily perceived or understood, except in the still and quiet sabbath of the soul, in which the Holy Spirit teaches us inwardly by meditation on the Word, in which he enlightens us, and "searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God" (1 Cor. 2 : 10); upon this account, we must first of all learn, how to bring the soul to that quiet state of internal rest. Something has been said by way of foundation upon this head, in the chapters treating of Prayer, inserted in Book II; which comes now more fully and perfectly to be handled in this Third Book: namely, how this hidden treasure, this pearl in the field of our hearts (Matt. 13 : 44, 45), is to be sought for by entering into ourselves, or rather into God. And this is the inward sabbath of a heart cleansed and purified by faith (Acts 15 : 9), and enlightened by the Holy Ghost. From this treasure of the Spirit and kingdom of God, hidden in the believing soul, sprang the wisdom of all the enlightened, Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, and other men of God that have ever existed. This pearl, then, is worth looking after, this field is worth tilling, and this gift of the

Spirit and divine grace must be stirred up in us; even as a spark of fire, which by continual application of breath, is blown up into a bright flame. 2 Tim. 1 : 6.

3. But that thou mayest more fully and distinctly apprehend in the commencement of this Third Book, which relates entirely to the inward man, how the children of God are to be drawn from the exterior to the interior man, or the ground of the heart; that they may search, know, purify, and change it, and keep their spiritual eyes fixed upon God, and his kingdom in the inmost recesses of the soul; that the reader, I say, may more fully understand this, I shall first of all more generally in this chapter, and then more particularly, touch upon and explain the several heads of this doctrine, referring occasionally to the Theology of Dr. John Tauler, and quoting him as often as possible in his own words. And here I may remark, that as the Holy Scripture, great and sacred as it is, regards the heart of man; so likewise, the whole divinity of Tauler aims at the inward man, the ground of the heart, and deepest recesses of the soul. Hence it is, that he again and again inculcates, "that God and the kingdom of God, are purely to be enjoyed, sought for, and found in the ground of the heart:" that is, whatsoever the Holy Scripture and its true interpretation, discover outwardly, all that ought to be really, spiritually, and truly felt and experienced in the ground of the soul. This cannot be without a frequent entering into the centre of the heart; so that the more deeply a man retires from the world, so much the more closely he is united to God; and the oftener the devout Christian practises this exercise, the more clearly will the kingdom of God, and this hidden treasure, be manifested in his soul. He that does not perceive in himself these fruits of the Spirit, or the new man, will never be one jot more acceptable in the sight of God for all his great knowledge and science; but shall be reckoned among those of whom Christ says, that they shall say in the last day, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name?" Matt. 7 : 21. For it is not the external appearance, but the internal reality, that will avail in the sight of God; not that which consists in the letter, but that which flows from the Spirit, and consists in the Spirit. This is the true ground of the distinction mentioned in the Preface, betwixt one taught by the world, and him that is taught of God; that is, betwixt a *learned* man, and a *holy* man. The learned man is instructed outwardly by the letter; but the holy man by God, inwardly by the Holy Ghost, by the "anointing" which teacheth all things. 1 John 2 : 27. The wisdom of the learned consists in words; the wisdom of the holy man, in power. For "the kingdom of God is not in words, but in power." 1 Cor. 4 : 20.

4. But as a general account of this will not be sufficient for the simple and unlearned, to bring them to this fundamental knowledge of themselves, I shall therefore descend to a more particular explication, asking them, at the same time, to attend to the "Five Parts" of their Catechism, and to understand how these are not to remain *without* them, but must be *within* them. First, therefore, thou believest that God delivered his law upon Mount Sinai, written upon two tables of stone; and that this law is the will of God, which thou art obliged to obey. You do well to believe this. But this faith profiteth not, unless

God himself write his law in your heart (Jer. 31 : 33), and accomplish his will in you. Now this can never be effected, unless, having now become a Christian, you dedicate your whole heart to God, and offer up your will to him, that His will may be fulfilled in you. The royal prophet David, who well knew the dignity and necessity of this divine operation, employs especially the whole 119th Psalm in earnest prayers to God, that he would vouchsafe to guide and govern him according to his law and testimonies, that so this heavenly work might not by any means be hindered in him. Further, you believe that Christ is your righteousness, your life and salvation. 1 Cor. 1 : 30. You do well to believe this, "for other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 3 : 11): "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Acts 4 : 12. Yet, remember that you must have Christ within you; that is, you must lay hold on him inwardly by faith, and make him, both as to his Person and office, your own. For if Christ be thine, it follows that all things which are God's are also yours; and that if he had ten thousand worlds and kingdoms full of righteousness and blessedness, yet by faith all are thine. For the righteousness of Christ is greater than all these. So in like manner, though the guilt of ten thousand worlds lay upon thee, yet should it not be able to hurt thee. This then is the treasure which thou must have within thee, as our Lord tells us, "The kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17 : 21): that is, "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." Rom. 14 : 17.—Thou believest that Christ is the eternal Word of the Father; that he is the true life and light of man. John 1 : 4. Thou believest aright. But then, thou must take care, that this Word speak in thee, that this light shine in thee, that this life live in thee. For unless thou hast this inward treasure in thy soul, and art united to Christ by a living faith, everything else shall avail thee nothing. Again, thou thinkest thyself obliged by duty and interest, to pray to God, to give him thanks, and to praise his name (Psalm 92 : 1, 2), and in this thou judgest right. But take care that Christ himself pray within thee, and the Holy Spirit groan within thee (Rom. 8 : 26); for as he is "the Spirit of grace and of supplications" (Zech. 12 : 10), so, in order to make thy prayers effectual, it is necessary that he also pray in thy heart, the temple of spirit and truth. John 4 : 23. If this be not done, thy prayers are all of little avail.—Thou believest that in Baptism thou receivest remission of sins, the new birth, and adoption as a child of God. Thou believest aright. But unless thou find in thyself the fruit of baptism, the new birth, the unction of the Spirit, and divine illumination, thy baptism shall avail thee nothing.—Thou believest, according to the words of St. Matthew (Matt. 26 : 26), that in the external Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, thou receivest the true, essential body and the blood of Christ. Thou believest aright. But if thou dost not also eat it inwardly and spiritually, thou wilt not only lose all the benefits of that institution, but dost also eat and drink condemnation to thyself. 1 Cor. 11 : 29.—Thou believest that Christ was the true Lamb of God offered for us upon the cross. John 1 : 29. Yet consider: What good can this do thee, unless the same

Lamb of God become the daily food and nourishment of thy inward man? 1 Cor. 5 : 7. It appears, therefore, that thy treasure ought to be *within* thee, and that unless thou seek it there, thou shalt never find it.

CHAPTER II.

TRUE FAITH, AND CONVERSE WITH THE SOUL, THE ONLY MEANS OF ATTAINING TO THIS INWARD TREASURE.

Bring it again to mind, O ye transgressors.—ISA. 46 : 8

THE true way of attaining this divine inward treasure is, by a true and living faith. Though we have already in Books I and II treated largely of faith, with all its powers and properties, how it cleaves unto Christ, rests and depends upon him; yet we must here return to it, and show of what use and advantage it is, in the matter before us. The property of a true and living faith is, to cleave unto God with our whole heart; to put our whole trust in him; to depend upon him; to dedicate and resign ourselves entirely to his mercy and goodness; to be united to God; and to enjoy him in the internal rest of the soul. True faith prefers nothing to God; it makes him the true object of all its desires, by unfeigned abstraction from all earthly comforts. In a word, it places its chief, eternal, infinite, and perfect good in Him alone, who is the true fountain of all good, whether in heaven or earth, in time or eternity, and all through Jesus Christ, who is "the author and finisher of our faith." Heb. 12 : 2. This is that faith which leads us to our inward treasure, which is our chief good. Of this the Psalmist was an instance: he was full of this faith: "Whom," says he, "have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee." Ps. 73 : 25. Such was the faith of Mary, the sister of Lazarus, when she sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word with eagerness. Luke 10 : 39. For faith, as has been observed, brings the soul into the true sabbath of the heart, into a state of divine quiet and heavenly rest, in which God delights to manifest himself. Therefore the Lord said to Martha: "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: but one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her." Luke 10 : 41, 42. What is "that good part" but God in Jesus Christ? For by this faith which opens the heart, in order to receive God alone is that better part chosen. By this faith it is, that the ever-blessed Trinity enters into the heart, and takes possession of it. Eph. 3 : 17; John 14 : 23. This is "that good part" which we ought all to choose; namely, eternal life and blessedness.

2. In this one article is contained the whole sum of the Christian religion; it is the fountain of charity and of all virtues. For faith produceth love; love produceth hope; hope, patience; patience worketh meekness;

meekness, humility; humility produceth the fear of God; and the fear of God teacheth us to pray to him, to "crucify the flesh" (Gal. 5:24), to deny ourselves, to hate our own life, and to despise the world. Matt. 16:24. Upon this account St. John calls faith, "the victory that overcometh the world." 1 John 5:4. This was that one thing to which our Lord directed the attention of the rich young man in the Gospel (Luke 18:18), when he asked him, saying, "Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" When he had commanded him to keep the commandments of God, he answered, "All these have I kept from my youth up." Jesus, hearing him, said, "Yet lackest thou one thing; sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come follow me." In these words the Lord directs him to choose that one thing, that better part, by faith; and, by forsaking himself and his worldly possessions, to turn to God, the true fountain and centre of his being and happiness. From this one thing proceeds the whole Christian life, and all the commandments, as a stream from its fountain, not by compulsion or law, but from love and freedom of the spirit. "For it is God which worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13); neither will he own anything in us as his, which he himself has not wrought. Here, then, is no need of laws, no need of commands or prohibitions. For faith, by its free motion and spirit, does everything in us which is necessary to be done: that is, it surrenders itself freely and entirely to God, and to the operations of his grace. And this is what the prophet Isaiah means, when he invites us to come unto God, to "buy wine and milk without money and without price." Isa. 55:1.

3. Faith, then, is the means of attaining to this inward treasure, whilst it keeps a sabbath of rest unto God in every soul that is collected into itself. For as the motion of the heavens is therefore the most perfect, because it terminates in itself, and returns to its beginning; so the life of man may then be accounted most excellent and perfect when it returns to its original, which is God. And this a man does, when he enters deeply into himself, having collected all the powers of his understanding, will, and memory, and emptied them of the world, and all the lusts of the flesh; offering up his soul, with all its affections, to God, by the Holy Ghost, and celebrating an eternal sabbath in his presence. Then God begins to operate in him. He waits for such a frame of spirit, and rejoices to finish his work within us. For so great is the love of God towards us, so ardent is his affection, that it is as if his divinity itself could not consist without us; as if he should himself cease to be, unless he could discover the abyss of his divinity in us, and transfuse the overflowing fulness of his essence into us. So that the most acceptable service a man can do unto God, is to keep his heart so quiet and still that God may rest and manifest himself in it. All that God requires, in order to accomplish this work in us, is an humble and quiet spirit. Whenever he finds such a habitation, he dwells there with a high manifestation of his wisdom and power. The eternal wisdom of God cannot unite with the wisdom of man; but when the human soul is entirely submitted to God, then God entirely rests in her. But if thou wilt engage thy will, thy

understanding, memory, and affections in the service of thy own mind, then they are no longer proper instruments for the work of God. For in every union of two beings as one, the one must of necessity be active and the other passive. But God is an infinite and eternally active power, an essential pure motion; perpetually operating in thee, unless hindered by thee. This may be illustrated by the following similitude: as the eye cannot fix upon any object, nor receive any impressions from it, unless it be free from all other images (for otherwise one will hinder the other); so the soul, with all her powers, understanding, will, and memory, can receive no impressions or influences from God, if it be not empty of, and disengaged from, the world. The ear cannot receive or enjoy the sweetest music, whilst employed and filled with other sounds: so neither can the soul receive the divine sweetness whilst it listens to the voice of the world. The more, therefore, a soul withdraws itself from the world, the nearer it approaches to God. The more it renounces the pleasures of the flesh, the nearer it comes to the participation of "the divine nature." 2 Pet. 1 : 4.

4. Nature cannot admit a vacuum. So if a man will empty himself of the love of the world and himself, with all his passions and affections for worldly things, God will infallibly fill his soul with divine grace, love, wisdom, and knowledge. But if thou art full of worldly things, thou canst not at the same time be full of heavenly things. When Abraham, at the command of God, went from his own country and kindred, then was he enlightened from above. Gen. 12 : 1; 13 : 1. Our carnal affections, self-love, self-will, and self-conceit, with all our inclinations to the profits and pleasures of the world, are to us as so many near friends and relations; and it is hard to flesh and blood to part with them. But how hard soever it be, this is the first step that conducts to this hidden treasure, this pearl of great price; of which our Lord says, that the merchant having "found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it." Matt. 13 : 46. This is what the Lord says: "Verily, I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, but shall receive a hundredfold, and eternal life." Mark 10 : 29, 30. What are our brethren and sisters but our carnal lusts and corrupt inclinations, of which we must be emptied, if we expect to be filled with the fulness of God. As the Virgin Mary was a pure, immaculate virgin (so remaining eternally), when she conceived our Lord Jesus Christ (Luke 1 : 27); so must every soul be like a pure, immaculate virgin; that is, be unspotted, free from all the pollutions of the world, in order to this *spiritual* conception of him. A soul thus pure and unspotted is, "as the king's daughter, all glorious within" (Psalm 45 : 13); enriched with hidden treasure. But how can the soul be betrothed to God, that is betrothed to the world? "I come," saith our blessed Lord, "to send fire on the earth." Luke 12 : 49. Oh, that such a fire of divine love would so burn in us as to consume all our dross of worldly affections, that nothing might live and move in us but the pure and holy love of God! He adds, "I came not to send peace, but a sword." Luke 12 : 51; Matt. 10 : 34. And would to God that the Holy Spirit might so mortify and destroy all our carnal concupiscence, that God alone

might move and operate in us! But if you will say, that you are so much taken up with the business of the world, that you cannot be so collected as you ought, then set apart some corner of your house, and some little portion of your time, either by day or night, to retire into yourself, and to pour out your soul to God, in the words of St. Augustine: "Lord, my God, be pleased to enter into covenant with me, that I may die entirely to myself, and that thou mayest live in me; let me keep silence in myself, and do thou speak within me; let me rest from all things, that thou mayest operate in me."

CHAPTER III.

THE WHOLE TREASURE OF THE INNER MAN DEPENDS ON FAITH, NAMELY, GOD, CHRIST, THE HOLY SPIRIT, AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

God grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, etc.—Eph. 3 : 16, 17.

A CHRISTIAN ought to employ his greatest care and diligence, in learning the true nature and practice of faith. It is faith that unites us to Christ, and admits us into all the blessedness of the kingdom of God. Upon this account it is called, "a substance;—the substance of things hoped for." Heb. 11. For our whole Christian life consists in a living and operative faith, not in mere knowledge, not in a shadow or pretext, but in a living, active power. In a word, it is faith alone that can deliver us from our bondage of corruption and misery, and bring us into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. Whence, at our first admission into the Christian Church by holy Baptism, through which, as through a gate, we enter into the fold of Christ's sheep, faith stands at the head. "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved." Mark 16: 16. And St. Paul says, "This is the word of faith which we preach, that if thou believe in thine heart, etc., thou shalt be saved, etc." Rom. 10 : 8–10. But as the nature of faith may be better known by its properties, I shall briefly speak of eight of them in this chapter.

2. The first of these is, spiritual freedom or a release from sin and death, from the devil, from hell, the curse of the law, the Mosaic typical ceremonies, and from all the commands and traditions of men. For as nothing can cause greater agony to the soul, than to be compelled to bear the fiery darts of Satan, and the tyranny of Antichrist, by which the conscience is fettered and entangled with traditional precepts of men, as with cords and chains: so nothing can give it greater quiet, peace, and comfort, than to be delivered from this servitude of sin, Satan, and human traditions, into a true freedom and liberty of conscience; which liberty is nothing but a true and saving faith. For by

this faith we apprehend Jesus Christ, and all the treasures of his grace, particularly reconciliation with God, remission of sins, the Holy Spirit, and eternal life. He that has this faith cannot be hurt by sin, death, the devil, or the world; for he has Christ dwelling in him, who is his righteousness against sin; his life against death; his strength against the devil; his heaven against hell; his victory over the world; his blessing against the curse of all the world; his blessedness against all the miseries of this world; his liberty, from all the vain traditions of men. This our blessed Lord has briefly summed up in one sentence, "If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." John 8 : 36. Whence Christ is all in all unto faith, and the sum and completion of all our hopes and all our blessedness. So that faith gives quietness to the soul; peace and plenty to the conscience; freeing it from all fears and terrors, and causing the heart to rest joyfully and quietly in God.

3. Secondly, by faith the soul is united to Christ, as a bride with her bridegroom—"I will betroth thee unto me forever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness." Hosea 2 : 19. The consequence of this espousal, is a communication of all good things, yea, and of the cross itself, so that all that Christ has, belongs to the soul, and all that the soul has, belongs to Christ. Now as Christ has all heavenly and eternal gifts, such as wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, redemption, blessedness, and eternal life (1 Cor. 1 : 30): yea, is himself all these; the soul therefore receives them all. And, on the other hand, as our soul has nothing but sin, uncleanness, calamity, misery, sin and death, Christ has taken to him all these; bestowing his good things upon us, and taking our sins and miseries upon himself. But as the good things of Christ are eternal and omnipotent, so they root out, swallow up, and destroy all sin, death, and misery that are in us. For the eternal and invincible righteousness of Christ, is so superior to the power of sin in us, that it utterly destroys it; and by this means, the soul is delivered from its own sins, and clothed with the righteousness of Jesus Christ. Isa. 61 : 10. And surely this is a blessed exchange, when a man changes sin for righteousness, death for life, a curse for a blessing, and eternal misery for eternal blessedness. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8 : 1); for their sins are swallowed up in his righteousness. For if, as St. Paul says, "death is swallowed up in victory" (1 Cor. 15 : 54), it follows that sin also must be swallowed up.

4. Hence, thirdly, it follows, that by faith our souls are assured of everlasting happiness. "I am persuaded," saith St. Paul, "that no creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God." Rom. 8 : 38. "Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a tried stone; he that believeth shall not make haste." Isa. 28 : 16. And "I will make with you an everlasting covenant." Isa. 55 : 3. "My kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord, that hath mercy on thee." Isa. 54 : 10.

5. Hence, fourthly, arises the victory of faith over sin, death, hell, and the world. "Whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the world:—who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" 1 John 5, 4. In these words, the *original* of faith is discovered; that

it proceeds not from the powers of man, but that it is the work and gift of God (John 6 : 29); and that regeneration is a divine, and supernatural work. And as this new birth is in all respects superior to nature, therefore it cannot be hurt by any assaults from the world; for though a Christian be ever so much despised and abused by the world, yet is he in Christ a glorious and triumphant conqueror. "In all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us." Rom. 8 : 37.

6. Hence also arises, fifthly, the glory of faith, which is twofold: the one spiritual and hidden; the other, future, visible, and glorious in the world to come. Now faith makes us partakers of both kinds of Christ's glory. So then, as the majesty of Christ consists in his kingdom and high-priesthood; so also he makes us kings and priests unto God; an honor which, when St. Peter speaks of, he can hardly find words to express. "But ye," says he, "are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people." 1 Peter 2 : 9. Moreover, the glory of Christ's kingdom consists in this, that it is *eternal,* and all the blessings and benefits of it are eternal: eternal grace, everlasting righteousness, unfading consolation, endless life, joy, peace, and blessedness. What good could we expect from a temporal prince? All the world itself, and all its glories decay and perish; and there is no trust to be put in princes, nor in any child of man. But Christ is our *Eternal King;* and all his favors and blessings endure to eternity. The spiritual kingdom, then, of a Christian consists in this, that by faith he is spiritually exalted above all things; that nothing can hurt or hinder him, in the great affair of his salvation. Yea, all things are subject to him, and work together for his good, as we are told (Rom. 8 : 28): even life and death, the world, hell, and the devil himself. Hence it appears how glorious, how extensive this spiritual dominion of a Christian is, since all things, whether good or evil, are forced to contribute to his spiritual good, so soon as he is possessed of Christ, and Christ of him. For the whole treasure and hope of a Christian is—Christ apprehended by faith; Christ is all-sufficient. O the precious liberty of a Christian! O the mighty power of the inward man! As the liberty, righteousness, and blessedness of a Christian, as also his slavery, sin and misery, are not external things; so it follows, that no external thing, nothing but the mere grace and command of God, can justify, sanctify, or glorify a man. What though the body enjoy liberty, health, and strength, and eat and drink well, will the soul be the better for this? If the body be imprisoned, sick, weak, hungry, and thirsty, will the soul be the worse? Not at all. These things cannot make the soul either happy or miserable, whilst she preserves her inward treasure, and is true to her spiritual liberty. So also in respect of her spiritual priesthood, the soul is out of danger from anything that may happen without. Its sacrifices, prayers, and devotions, are spiritually performed by faith, without any necessary dependence upon external things; as time, place, food, garments, or temples. Again, the soul is not at all the better for any external circumstance; such as images, saints' robes, churches, external fasts, oral prayers, and other outward works. These are not efficacious enough to lead the soul into the paths of righteousness and liberty. All these things a hypocrite may do, without

any benefit to his soul. For there is nothing either in heaven or earth in which the soul can live, nothing that can bestow upon her righteousness and liberty, nothing in which she can rest with comfort, and joy, but CHRIST alone, on whom by faith she comfortably and joyfully depends. This is what our Lord himself tells us, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." John 14 : 6. And, "Come unto me, and ye shall find rest unto your souls." Matt. 11 : 28. The soul that is by faith united unto Christ, stands in need of nothing (John 10 : 11); for in Christ she possesses all things: food, joy, peace, light, knowledge, righteousness, truth, wisdom, liberty, comfort, blessedness, life, answers to prayer, and all things. So that "Christ is all, and in all" (Col. 3 : 11), as the Apostle tells us. And whatsoever external ceremonies we may conform to for the sake of peace, order, and uniformity, we may be satisfied that "unto the pure, all things are pure." Tit. 1 : 15. "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." John 15 : 3. So that nothing can defile the soul, but unbelief, and its fruits.

7. The sixth property of faith is, that it renews the whole man. It kindles in him the fire of divine love, and furnishes him with all Christian graces and works of mercy; not as if he merited thereby anything from God, but only as it renders the soul grateful to Him. "Offer unto God thanksgiving, and pay thy vows unto the Most High." Ps. 50 : 14. So that faith immediately begins a new life in man, and quickens him through the Word of God: for all the Holy Scripture is contained in faith. As therefore the Word of God is holy, true, just, living, spiritual, free, and full of all good; so also it makes all those who receive it in faith, holy, just, true, the children of God, "thoroughly furnished unto all good works." 2 Tim. 3 : 17.

8. Seventhly, though true and saving faith triumphs over the world and the devil; yet is it of such a nature, that, in pure love, it makes itself servant unto all. He who has it, considers seriously with himself, that Jesus Christ and all the heavenly graces are freely given him by God, so that he stands in need of no worldly thing in the concern of salvation: and withal, that "nothing can separate him from the love of God" (Rom. 8 : 38), and that nothing in this world can hurt him. When a man, endued with a lively faith, considers all this, he cannot but acknowledge, that in mere gratitude to God, he is obliged to do for his neighbor, as Christ hath done for him. He will say, "All my gifts and graces, my wisdom, my understanding, my riches, my comfort, are all my neighbor's, as freely as Jesus Christ, by his infinite mercy, has bestowed them on me."

9. The eighth property of faith is, that it conquers and triumphs over every cross, yea, glories in the cross. For we find more comforts in Christ by faith, than we leave in forsaking the world for his sake; more honor, than the united malice of the world can take from us. In him we meet with so much love, that we shall not regard the hatred and enmities of men; such blessings, that all the curses in the world cannot impair them; so much joy, that all the world cannot make us sad. If it were possible for us to be slain and murdered ten thousand times over, yet Christ remains, and will forever continue to be our Lord, and our everlasting Life, infinitely to be preferred before this short and fleeting life.

CHAPTER IV.

THE BELIEVING SOUL SEEKS GOD INTERNALLY, IN ITSELF; ITS BEAUTY AND BLESSEDNESS WHEN IT IS UNITED WITH GOD.

I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it; that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.—John 17: 26.

THERE are two ways of seeking after God, the one external, and the other internal. The first is the active way, when man seeks after God; the second is the passive, when God seeks after man. In the outward way, we seek God by various exercises of a Christian life; as fasting, prayer, retirement, meekness, accordingly as we are moved by God, or led by devout people. In the inward, we enter into the ground of our hearts, attending upon the revelation of the kingdom of God which is within us. Luke 17: 21. For if the kingdom of God be in us, then God himself is in us, and more intimately united to the soul than she is to herself: and such a treasure as this within us, ought carefully to be attended to. The soul that desires to enter into this inward way, must entirely resign and submit itself to all the dispensations of Providence, both inward and outward; must perfectly rest in God, and be content to be, as God shall appoint, poor or rich, cheerful or sad, peaceful or joyless. For thus the soul is cleansed from all created images that may crowd into it from without; and when thus stripped of all rational, sensible, and created things, and everything which is not God, she comes at last into her own ground and centre, and there with a pure eye discovers the essential light and presence of God. But before this treasure can be obtained, everything else must be forsaken. Blessed and truly happy are they that find it: for being entirely divested of all worldly affections, they live in a constant union with God.

2. And now, if a man could with his bodily eyes take a view of such a soul as this, he would see the most beautiful creature in the world, shining forth in all the transcendent beauties of holiness; for such a soul is united to God, and by consequence is a partaker of His glory, not by *nature*, but by *grace*. It desires nothing either in time or eternity but God alone, seeking nothing for its own sake, either spiritually or naturally. On the other hand, could we but see with our bodily eyes a soul sunk in the love of itself and the creatures, wholly polluted with the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life; and all its corrupt thoughts and imaginations externally figured by visible characters and impressions; neither earth nor hell could furnish a more dreadful monster than this. But in the last great day, when the hearts and consciences of all men shall be laid open (1 Cor. 4: 5), and the inward eye shall be unclosed, so that every one shall have a full view of himself, then shall such an impure soul see its secret abominations, and find in itself an eternal source of sorrow, misery, and torment. On the other hand, the pure and divine soul shall forever contemplate in itself the presence and kingdom of God, whom it shall forever see as He is, and by

virtue of its union with him, possess and enjoy him as its own forever. He that rightly considers this union of the soul with God, shall experimentally understand that expression of St. Paul, that "neither height nor depth can separate us from the love of God." Rom. 8 : 39. For if it were possible that such a soul should be in hell, yet could it not be separated from the presence and kingdom of God, to which it is most intimately united. On the other hand, should a damned spirit, or the devil himself, be admitted into Paradise and heaven, yet could they not be exempt from the torments of hell, which they continually carry about in themselves.

CHAPTER V.

SHOWING HOW A MAN MAY BE DRAWN TO GOD; ALSO, WHEREIN SPIRITUAL POVERTY CONSISTS; AND, WHAT THE DEGREES OF HUMILITY ARE.

He that humbleth himself shall be exalted.—LUKE 18 : 14.

MANY are the means which men make use of to come to a union with God; such as reading, and other external exercises of religion. But in truth, next to that true, living faith which purifies the soul from the love of the creatures (as has already been shown, and will be further explained below, chap. ix), there is no better or easier method than that of *true humility*. This, however, does not consist in words, or in any external behavior; but is seated in the bottom of the soul, so that the man upon all accounts, both natural and spiritual, reckons and esteems himself as nothing; and being thus truly poor in spirit (Matt. 5 : 3), he values neither wealth nor honor, body nor soul, peace nor joy, nor anything in the world, in comparison with his duty and the glory of God. Yea, should it please God to inflict even the agony of hell upon him, he would acknowledge that he deserved it; and he would most cheerfully and contentedly submit, esteeming the will of God as the only measure and standard of his duty and happiness, and continuing to offer praise. This is that true poverty of spirit which disposes a man cheerfully to part with, or submit to, anything, according to the will of God; after the example of our blessed Saviour, who not only *did*, but also *suffered* the will of his Father (Matt. 26 : 39), and voluntarily chose the accursed death of the cross, and therefore was highly exalted by God. Phil. 2 : 9. Whosoever has this humility, is truly poor in spirit; and though he possessed the greatest temporal riches, yet would they be no hindrance to his union with God. This is that "poor man" of whom the Psalmist speaks: "This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him." Ps. 34 : 6. And if we could suppose such a one to be at ever so great a distance from God, yet would the most merciful Father, out of his abundant mercy and goodness, infallibly draw him to himself. For the fulness of divine grace chooses to dis-

cover itself in the depth of human misery, and can no more forsake it, than a tender father could leave his beloved son under the agonies of a dangerous sickness. Of this we have an instance in the woman of Canaan, who, looking upon herself as no more worthy than a dog, immediately obtained help of Jesus. Matt. 15 : 27, 28. For no man ever yet came to the fountain of living truth, but by the way of humility and poverty of spirit, arising from a knowledge of his utter unworthiness. He that understands this, will never think contempt, reproaches, poverty, or the cross, either bitter or irksome to him. Yea, rather with the holy apostles, he rejoices that God has thought him worthy to suffer shame for His name (Acts 5 : 41), so that God in his glory may enter into his soul in his misery. Hence the truest and safest way of coming to a union with God, is that of deep humility and true poverty of spirit.

2. There are six steps or degrees of humility, by which we may arrive at the perfection of spiritual joy and peace. The first step is, that a man reckon himself as inferior to all men, and have no desire for the honor and esteem of men. The second is, to despise and judge no man, but have a constant eye upon himself. The third is, to refuse and avoid honors that are offered; and if they cannot be avoided, to receive them with regret. The fourth, to bear reproaches with joy. The fifth, to converse willingly with men of inferior condition, and be so far from thinking ourselves better than they, as rather to think ourselves the most miserable of all men, and the chief of sinners. The sixth is, to submit readily and cheerfully, not only to our superiors, but even to the least and meanest. By these steps we ascend to the last and highest of all, where is the throne of peace. "The way is humble," says Augustine, "but the country to which it leadeth is on high." King Solomon's throne had six steps conducting to it (1 Kings 10 : 19); on the top Solomon (that is, *Peaceable*, 1 Chron. 22 : 9) sat enthroned. So when we have ascended the six steps, we shall find the heavenly Prince of Peace—true *peace* of heart. There is no coming to the exalted felicity of the kingdom of God, but by the low valley of humility and self-denial.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SEAT OF GOD IN THE SOUL.

Whither is thy beloved gone, O thou fairest among women?—Cant. 6 : 1.

THOUGH our "beloved" is always with us, yet he never discovers himself but when the heart is quiet and composed, and all the senses are collected in God. When nothing earthly appears in the understanding, but all its animal and worldly wisdom is swallowed up in faith; then the divine light arises, darting light and glory through the benighted soul. This is

that darkness which is the habitation of God; that night, in which the will rests in union with the will of God; and in which the memory forgets all the impressions of the creatures. Then, in a moment, the divine light strikes the understanding, heavenly desires inflame the will, and eternal joys possess and fill the memory; yet neither the understanding, the will, nor the memory, can comprehend or retain the transcendent joys with which they are visited of God. For this perception is not lodged in the faculties of the soul, but lies hid in the very centre of it. Yea, it may sometimes be awakened through the Word, and break forth in words, so that we may cry out with St. Augustine's mother Monica, "Let us fly away, let us fly away to the eternal joy."

2. From this fountain spring all the unutterable groanings of holy souls. This was the sweetness that St. Paul tasted, when he uttered these words, "I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God" (Rom. 8 : 38): meaning *that* love of God to us, which he had tasted in his own soul. Thus St. Augustine witnesses of himself, "that he sometimes felt such exalted joy in his inward soul, that if it were but lasting, it could be nothing else but eternal life." This is that divine pleasure which would fill our souls, and draw them to itself: and by these foretastes we know what eternal life is; that it is a state in which our souls shall be fully satisfied with heavenly joy and sweetness. Hence the devout soul says, "I am sick of love." Cant. 5 : 8. That is: "This is the height of my wishes, this is what I long and sigh after: that I may find my beloved, and be satisfied with his love, and recover my heavenly nobility, which consists in union with Christ; that I may nevermore delight in any worldly or transitory things, much less in sins, or sinful pleasures."

3. This nobility of the soul is but little known to the men of this world, even those that are accounted wise and learned: and they that have written volumes about the soul and its faculties, have never come to the fundamental point. For Christ is the true strength of the soul, its understanding, will, and memory; that is, light in its understanding; pleasure in its will; and joy in its memory. So Christ is the true sanctification, glory, and ornament of the soul; so that a man, for the love of Christ, which he experiences in himself, does not desire to sin. Thus we are told, "Whoso abideth in him, sinneth not. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin." 1 John 3 : 6, 9. Yea, from this love of Christ arises often joy so great as to make crosses and afflictions not only tolerable, but even desirable for Christ's sake (Acts 5 : 41); so that the cross is turned into joy, which is continually springing up from its eternal fountain in the centre of the soul. There God has sanctified a place for himself, and made it so peculiarly his own, that neither angel, nor man, nor any other creature, can enter there. Here it is that God delights to dwell, and he suffers no other being to dwell with him. God's delight is to dwell in a pure soul. So he tells us, "My delights are with the sons of men." Prov. 8 : 31. But what this happiness is, or how great this delight is, no man knows but he who has experienced it; nor can even he explain it fully in words.

CHAPTER VII.

OF THE DIGNITY OF THE SOUL; OF TRUE REPENTANCE; AND, OF DIVINE MERCY.

My house is the house of prayer.—Luke 19 : 46; Matt. 21 : 13; Isa. 56 : 7.

THE dignity of the soul consists in this, that it is the habitation and temple of God, in which he takes more delight than in the whole compass of heaven and earth. So the believing soul has more of the divine presence than heaven, than all the temples made with hands, yea, than all the creatures in the world. For God communicates his whole treasures of love to such a soul; he rejoices and delights in it; yea, through all creatures he seeks to make the soul of man happy and glorious. Wherefore, as God shows so much love, and takes so much pleasure in the soul of man, he may more properly be said to dwell in it than in any material buildings, yea, than in heaven itself. Here he displays all the wonders of his providence and love; yea, for this very end has he created it with nobler faculties than he has given to the rest of his creatures, that it might be capable of these exalted communications of the divine grace. And if God should bestow upon the soul anything less than himself, she would reject it as being too little. Now St. Paul tells us, "God hath chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world." Eph. 1 : 4. Let this then be our labor, this our highest endeavor, to be really what we have been from the beginning of the world. And as the soul ought to be the spouse of the Son of God, it follows that it is beloved by God above other creatures. It was this love that brought the blessed Jesus down from heaven to be united to the beloved soul which the Father had betrothed to him from all eternity, and to bring it back to the great original from which it at first proceeded.

2. Now as God has discovered this transcendent love to the soul, it follows that the soul ought to rest in God alone, and not to waste its love on any creature, at which it knows that God will be offended. So great is the loveliness, so great the beauty that is in God, that if the soul could take ever so remote, ever so obscure a view of it, she would not be separated from him to gain the whole world. The soul, then, which is so beloved of God, should be ashamed to fix its love upon any creature which is offensive to God. She ought to be heartily ashamed and afflicted if she has not preferred God before all creatures, proposed his glory in all things, and loved him above all things; this is the true contrition which is acceptable to God. The whole creation naturally loves God more than itself, and spends itself in the execution of his commands; but the miserable sinner loves himself better than his God. If thy sorrow, therefore, proceed merely from a sense of thy own loss, and not of thy sins and offences against God, thy contrition is not true, thy sorrow is not acceptable before God. Though there were no heaven to reward thee, nor hell to punish thee, yet thou oughtest to be grieved that thou hast offended and provoked thy God. For the love

of God is very heaven, and his anger is hell. But if thou hast in thy heart that contrition which is here described, and true faith in Christ, thy sins shall freely be forgiven thee. For it is more agreeable to him to forgive sins, than to punish them: not to mention, that as he is our Father, and we are his children, he is obliged in justice to show mercy to us. For if he be our Father, it follows that he has a fatherly affection towards us, which will upon all occasions rejoice and triumph against the severity of his justice. To this fatherly affection of God, let us perfectly resign ourselves. Whosoever rests in this, will be well pleased both with the justice and the mercy of God. For he that truly loves God, will bear patiently all the determinations of His will, either towards himself or towards any other creature. Let his will be thine; remember the saying of one of old: "I would rather be in hell with God, than in heaven without him."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CALLING OF GOD IS EARNEST AND SINCERE, AND DIRECTS US TO COME TO HIM.

He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people.—Ps. 50 : 4.
He hath called us with a holy calling.—2 TIM. 1 : 9.

GOD, our heavenly Father, by all the methods and arguments of love, is continually calling and drawing us to himself. So great is his love towards us, that it is as if his own essence and blessedness were affected by our wandering from him. Hence, all his works of creation, both in heaven and earth, all the wonders of his providence, tend to this one great end, namely, to recall and bring back fallen man to himself. All his words and all his actions, call to the soul to return to the love of God from which it fell, by hearkening to the tempting insinuations of Satan.

2. God invites us to believe in his Son, and to follow the steps of his meekness and patience, and by this means, to be reunited to himself, our chief Good. For as when God called to Elijah, and the fire passed by, and the strong wind that rent the mountains; yet God was not in them, but came at last in the still small voice (1 Kings 19 : 11, 12); so at this day he descends and manifests himself in humble, quiet, and peaceable souls. And as Ahasuerus sustained Esther when she fell down at his feet, for fear of his majesty (Esther 5 : 2; 8 : 3, 4); so God comforts and supports the humble man, who has a true sense of his own nothingness, and trusts not in his own strength. And were not God to support him with the everlasting arm of his omnipotence, he would sink under the apprehensions of his own unworthiness. Such a man is so humbled in his own eyes, that he would seem to sink below the vilest of all creatures. But no sooner does the mighty King of heaven cast a look upon such an humble soul, but it is strengthened and

refreshed with the divine consolation. This is the consequence of true humility, when deeply rooted in the soul; the lower the soul sinks in its own esteem, the higher it rises in the sight of God. If to this there be added, external contempt and reproaches, they sink the soul yet more deeply into self-abasement, and by consequence bring her so much the nearer to God. This is the soil most fit to produce that peace of spirit "which passeth all understanding." Phil. 4: 7. This is the fruit of trials, injuries, and afflictions. By these God prepares and purifies thee for himself, that at length thou mayest return to him, and he return to thee, and dwell in thee. And this consummation is not to be obtained by fine words and airy speculations, but by manifold afflictions. It is not talking or thinking of humility, that makes a man humble; but bearing the cross with patience; without which thou hast only the appearance, and not the reality of virtue. Upon this account the man that treats thee with reproach and contempt, ought to be regarded as in truth thy benefactor. For these two virtues, meekness and patience, are not to be gained except by various conflicts and severe trials, which are very great and grievous to human nature. For how canst thou exercise these virtues, unless in the time of suffering? Meekness regards the ground of the soul, which is best tried in the hour of adversity. And patience respects the inner man, who is to go out with Christ, bearing his reproach. Heb. 13: 13. And thus the man is conformed to the most holy and innocent life of Christ; and Christ, with his death and passion, lives and governs in him.

3. There is also another, namely, an *inward* calling of God: when he kindles in the devout soul the fire of his love. By this means he conveys himself to the soul, for he himself is love. For it is as impossible to possess God without a true perception of his love, as for a man to live without a soul. For that Christ doth "dwell in our hearts by faith" (Ephes. 3: 17), is only to be discovered by love ruling in us. 1 John 4: 16. And this divine love cannot rest in our hearts, until they are emptied of the love of the world (1 John 2: 15), and entirely and absolutely fixed upon God. It will be, therefore, a very useful exercise for a man often to examine his own heart, and see what is uppermost in his affections, God, or himself, or any creature: whether he loves life or death: what it is that principally engages his affections, and engrosses his thoughts. If upon inquiry thou findest thy heart set upon anything but God, that thou hast any affection that does not ultimately centre and terminate in him, then God cannot enter into thy soul, though thou shed as many tears as there are drops in the ocean, and thou must abide forever without him. Unhappy mortals, what are you doing? Why do you suffer a deceitful world to impose upon you by the love of the creatures, and insinuate itself into the centre of your souls, which God requires to be consecrated to his own use? It was for this end that we came into the world, that by mortification of our own will, and contempt of the world and creatures, we should return to God, and be reconciled to him; so that as the body is to return to the earth again, the spirit should also return to God that gave it. Eccl. 12: 7. If thou returnest not in this life, thou art undone to all eternity. By that in which thou hast placed thy joy and thy delight here, shalt thou be judged hereafter. Let then this con-

viction be deeply fixed in thy heart: Whensoever thy heart is emptied of the world and the creatures, it shall forthwith be filled with all the fulness of God; yea, assure thyself, that were it necessary to leave heaven and earth, God would certainly do it, in order to take possession of a soul thus emptied of the world, and prepared to receive him. On the other hand, if thou be full of the world, God cannot enter. The more delight any man takes in the creatures, the farther is he removed from God. How lamentable a case this is, I need not stay to explain. This then is a certain conclusion, that not through worldly joys and pleasures, but through many tribulations, we must enter into the kingdom of heaven.

CHAPTER IX.

THE PURIFYING INFLUENCE OF TRUE FAITH.

God purifies their hearts by faith.—ACTS 15: 9.

THE property of true faith, is to purify the heart from the world, and all earthly, vain, and perishing desires; in a word, from all things in which corrupt nature delights itself, whether riches, honors, or pleasures. Faith fixes its eye upon those things only, that are invisible and eternal; and when all impediments are removed, a union quickly follows; and there can be no union of things, except they be alike. God is pure action, and wheresoever he finds a soul empty of the world, there he delights to operate, and manifest himself, as the spring of life and comfort to the afflicted longing soul. Therefore the usual language of Christ in the Gospel to the sick, whom he healed, was, "Thy faith hath made thee whole." Matt. 9: 22; 15: 28. His meaning was not, that this was the effect of the mere act of faith; but that faith had so cleansed, purified, and humbled the soul, that it was now fit for the more exalted manifestations of the divine power and presence. Hence, when our blessed Lord could find no souls so qualified in Nazareth, he could do no mighty works there. Mark 6: 5. For where the creature is, God cannot enter; one hinders the other. No man can more heartily desire the assistance of God, than He desires to communicate it to a devout and well-disposed soul. For as God fills such a soul with his light, consolation, and gracious presence; so the longing soul rises as naturally towards God, as the fire burns. When God has once taken possession of such a habitation, he operates in it all the wonders of his grace, in which he rejoices as once he did in our Lord Jesus Christ; because in him he accomplished his own will, without any impediment. For no work or action can please him, which does not begin and end in him. And as God delights thus to operate in man, so he continually waits to see when we are fit to receive him; being more ready to give, than we are either to ask or to receive. Take heed, therefore, that thou neglect not the present opportunity. For

after this life is over, we shall all receive according to our works, and according to the principle of love that ruled in our hearts, whether it be good or bad, God or the creature. And this is so certain, that should all the saints of God intercede with tears of blood for any one man, it would be lost labor. For that which has possessed thy heart, and engrossed thy affections here, shall be thy lot and portion to eternity.

2. And as true faith purifies the heart from worldly love; so it does also from inordinate affections, as anger and impatience; planting meekness and patience in respect to our neighbor in their stead. For God works nothing in the souls of believers, but that which is agreeable to his own nature. Now what is He, but mere love, patience, and gentleness itself, as he has manifested himself in our blessed Lord Jesus Christ? As then the love of God overflows towards all men, having mercy upon all; so it produces the same love in every Christian soul, a love free and universal; making no difference either of friend or foe, but being equally united to God, and to the whole race of mankind. Moreover, this love rejoices in all the good things that God bestows upon man, and is pleased with that variety of gifts which are bestowed upon the several members of Christ's body; to each of which it pays a proper and proportionable respect. For as there is a mutual agreement between the several members of the natural body, in which the more ignoble parts, as the hands and feet, serve the more noble, as the head, the eyes, and the heart; so ought there to be the same agreement between the members of the spiritual body of Christ. Wherefore, if we meet with any member of Christ, who is more worthy than ourselves, we ought proportionably to love and esteem him more than ourselves. And the greater the portion of divine grace and favor which he has received from Jesus Christ, our supreme Head, is, the greater respect and love we ought to pay him. For this good is common to all, as being derived from our universal Head, Christ Jesus. But we cannot enjoy it without charity, which makes all our neighbor's blessing our own; and whatsoever we love in God, and for his sake, considered as a universal good, is properly ours. And as by charity, all our neighbor's blessings are made our own, therefore, how many, or how great favors soever God bestows upon a good man, they are no less mine than his, if I love them as the gifts of God, and for His sake. Yea, if any man receive the blessings of God with fear and humility, not being exalted with pride and arrogance; and if I can behold them in him, and love them for God's sake, and as proceeding from Him, they are as properly mine as his. This is the way by which we become spiritually rich in God, and are made partakers of all the blessings of heaven and earth; yea, and of all the happiness that is laid up in store for the children of God, by the mediation of our spiritual Head, Christ Jesus. So deep, so close is this union, that I am actually and properly possessed of all the blessings which our head Christ Jesus has diffused through all his members, whether men, or angels, in heaven and earth. And the effect of this inward love is patience, by which a man readily and willingly takes up his cross, as a preparation for very exalted gifts of God. For no cross comes without its special grace. This made one of the holy men of old exclaim: "Hail, bitter cross, full

of grace and glory." And St. Peter says: "This is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief." 1 Pet. 2 : 19.

3. And they, who from love to the cross of Christ, willingly bear their own, are thereby made partakers of an eminent pleasure and of peace of mind. He, then, that labors under any cross, external or internal, and yet, although his heart may bleed, without complaining bears it patiently, for the sake of his suffering Redeemer, may rest assured, that his sufferings shall end in glory, and his sorrow shall be turned into joy. The divine consolations are ever at hand to the resigned and patient soul; which peace is that inestimable pearl, the riches of the inward man, which no man can explain or comprehend but he that has it. In a word, this is that "peace which passeth all understanding," of which St. Paul speaks in Phil. 4 : 7.

CHAPTER X.

SHOWING HOW THE NATURAL LIGHT IN US MUST DISAPPEAR, AND THE LIGHT OF GRACE SHINE FORTH.

God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts.—2 COR. 4 : 6.

WHOSOEVER would have a just notion of the light of nature, and the light of grace, must nicely distinguish between the faculties of the soul; that is to say, the reason, the will, and the senses, and the pure essence of the soul. (See below, Chap. XXI.) The light of nature resides in the reason, will, and senses. These faculties, as long as they keep the soul in subjection to them, hinder the divine light of grace from displaying itself in the pure essence of the soul; so that before this can rise, the other must set. For the light of grace is above all sense and reason; yea, is hindered by them. Thou seest, then, how little the natural man can do in divine things—even nothing at all.

2. Let us now consider how the light of grace generally arises in the soul. God has the word of grace, which he has commanded to be preached, and by which he operates; and this word is spirit and life. John 6 : 63. And though God by his power and providence is everywhere present, yet his proper habitation, in which he peculiarly operates and kindles his divine light, is the soul of man. So that the divine light in the soul proceeds not from the senses, nor from reason, nor any natural faculty; but merely and entirely from the operation of divine grace in the soul. And this is the eternal fountain of comfort, peace, truth, wisdom, and life, the chief and everlasting happiness of the soul. Thus the only happiness of the soul is its union with God, and the operation of his grace: and of this, no creature that has not the image of God, can partake. For nothing but God's own image is capable of his light, his grace, and his wisdom.

3. By this light the soul truly recovers its spiritual strength; that is, understanding, wisdom, and knowl-

edge in the hidden mysteries of God. Hereby also is produced in the soul such a high relish of divine love, so sweet and pleasant, that she has, as it were, an aversion and dislike of everything that is not divine. Hence arise holy desires after goodness, flowing from that inward spring in the soul, without the concurrence of any creature. The creatures indeed can excite in us admiration and joy, but all by external images and impressions; so that we ought carefully to distinguish between these different motions. The light of grace affects the very centre of the soul, beyond the comprehension of sense or reason. So then, the more thou art purified from, and emptied of, the creatures, the more frequently and plenteously shalt thou be refreshed with the visits of divine light and truth. Now from this light arises the knowledge of truth, from which, so soon as a man turns himself, he falls into error. For the region of truth is not without the soul, but within it; and from this light, are darted sometimes such flashes and streams of wisdom as show a man more in an instant than all the men in the world could teach him. Yea, the perception of this light but for a moment, will give the attentive soul more joy, comfort, and happiness than all the creatures in the world can afford. And this is transacted in the inmost recesses of the soul. This is the fountain at which the royal prophet David drank, as he tells us: "Thou, through thy commandments, hast made me wiser than mine enemies; for they are ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers; for thy testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts. I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I might keep thy word." Ps. 119:98–101. Thus speaks David, who, through that whole Psalm, makes it his prayer and request to God that he would let the divine light shine, and the divine Word speak, within him; that so, by the fear of God, and the diligent keeping of his commandments, he might securely preserve this great internal treasure. Upon which account he says that "the law of God was better unto him than thousands of gold and silver." Ps. 119: 72. In short, the soul that is sensible of the value and sweetness of this inward and heavenly treasure, can have no relish or esteem for the pomps and pleasures of this world; but will say with Solomon, "Vanity of vanities; all is vanity." Eccles. 1:2.

4. But as this light cannot shine in a wicked soul (for "what communion hath light with darkness?" 2 Cor. 6: 14), and yet is the greatest blessing of the soul, therefore holy David prays (so ardently (Ps. 119), so devoutly, yea, he falls into eloquence so copious as to astonish the reader), that it would please God to protect him from the darkness of sin, and keep him in his fear. Indeed, so exceedingly plentiful is this light, so wonderful is its charity, that, like a flash of lightning, it often strikes the hearts of wicked men, warning them of approaching ruin, and, as it were, snatching them from the jaws of destruction; which is undoubtedly the effect of this illumination. And in this sense, "the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehendeth it not." John 1:5. Now this divine light is hindered from displaying itself in the bottom of the soul by the restless activity of the external senses. For as the ear is perpetually longing to hear, the eye always employed in seeing, and the heart constantly taken up with ex-

ternal objects, this scatters and distracts the powers of the soul. Whereas, the light of grace cannot shine except in the most settled and composed frame of spirit; so that from this inward principle of light, the senses, the reason, the understanding, the will, and the memory, might be replenished with light and wisdom. For the enlightened soul neither sees, nor hears, nor speaks as before. It speaks no more the superficial language of the natural man, but words full of spirit and life. And now the enlightened soul begins in spirit to contemplate the glory of God, sighing after Him, and saying: "O God, who art most beautiful to my eyes, most sweet to my mouth, most charming to my ears, most dear to my heart!" The works that such a soul performs, are no longer her own, but the works of God; and so much the more noble than her own, as God is more noble than all creatures. Then also she comes to understand, that blessedness cannot be the reward of her own works, but is the gift of the grace of God. So likewise she finds more contentment when she suffers God to act in her, than when she works and labors herself; for by this means she has joy and comfort in all her actions, as knowing that they are all wrought in God. John 3:21.

CHAPTER XI.

GOD, THE LIGHT OF THE SOUL, DIRECTING US NOT TO JUDGE OUR NEIGHBORS.

God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.—1 JOHN 1:5.

GOD is the supreme, most pure, and beauteous light; flaming with an ardent desire of enlightening the souls of men, and uniting himself to them, if not hindered by the darkness which men "love rather than light." John 1:5; 3:19. But the darkness of the soul is the love of itself, and the love of the world, which obstruct the operations of God in us. Wherefore, if the soul would be a partaker of this divine light, let her take care not to be overcome by the love of the creatures, by covetousness, anger, self-love, ambition, and the lust of the flesh; for all these are the darkness of the world, in which the god of this world ruleth. 2 Cor. 4:4. A man must then forsake himself and all creatures, yea, everything that is not God; this is called the forsaking "all that he hath." Luke 14:33. Such a soul is fixed entirely upon God, and is enlightened by his truth; and if by the will of Providence he be required to engage in worldly affairs, he does it with humility and fear, still keeping the centre of his soul free from the creature and the world; so that the emanations of divine light are not obstructed, but flow in perpetual streams from their fountain, which is God.

2. This inward light breaks forth into external actions, so that whatsoever a man says, or does, or suffers, is no longer an act of his own, but of God, to whom he has surrendered and

dedicated himself. For how can he act, who is merely passive? So then, whatsoever impression or impulse thou findest in thyself, whether it be a devout desire, a good intention, an inclination to prayer or thanksgiving, all is from God, and not from thyself. Submit thyself, therefore, to the mighty hand of God, and suffer him to accomplish his will in thee; for so whatsoever thou doest, is in him, and through him, and he worketh in thee. For it is a necessary condition of all good works that they ultimately regard God, and be wrought in him. John 3 : 21. Hence we should live in him, pray in him, and do everything in him. One such work wrought in God, however insignificant it may be in the eye of the world, is of more value in the sight of God, than all the actions wrought in human strength. This is the spring of true virtue, the essence of which is, that it should begin and end in God. But in proportion as the love of the world and the creature prevails in thee, thou art farther removed from God: whilst the nearer God is to the ground of thy heart, the more deeply and plentifully will he shine forth, and manifest himself by works of charity and compassion towards thy neighbor. For our blessed Saviour tells us, "I am the light of the world." John 8 : 12. In him, therefore, let us act. Let us cleave to the love of this our Head, that we may be enlightened in Christ.

3. For of all our actions those only may be called "light," which proceed from God and diffuse themselves through the darkness and miseries of our neighbors, in patience, in meekness, in humility, in consolation, in compassion, in gentle reproofs, and charitable censures. Whereas from an arrogant love of censuring others arise self-esteem, a high mind, contempt, and insolence toward our neighbors. This is the root of innumerable sins. But as the light of the Holy Spirit cannot enter into such souls, so where he inhabits, these vices have no place. The man of God judges not his neighbor, unless compelled by necessity; and even then he does it with great gentleness, and in the proper time and place; lest while he attempt to cure one wound, he should make ten, by an unseasonable and improper application. One thing ought carefully to be observed in reproving our neighbor, namely, that we should not publish such uncharitable reflections upon him, as may in any way injure his reputation, either in his spiritual or temporal concerns; but on the contrary, every one should keep himself within the bounds of meekness and charity, lest he endanger his own humility and poverty of spirit. They that delight in uncharitable censures and railing accusations, are like the old serpent; their very breath is infected with his poison, whilst, like him, they delight in being accusers of the brethren. Whilst they know not themselves, they will dare to censure and judge their neighbors. Consider, O man, thy perverse heart, and judge thyself, but no one else. Luke 6 : 37. The false light of nature misleads thee, and draws thee blindly into pride, self-love, and rash censures of others. But know that this is not the light of God, but the very darkness of Satan.

4. But the true and divine light always discovers itself in modesty and humility. It hunts not after the empty applause of men, but seeks after God, from whom it proceeded, and into whom it longs and labors to

return. Such a man thinks himself the weakest, vilest, and most ignorant of all men; being fully persuaded that whatever good there is in him, it is not his but God's. Above all things, therefore, endeavor to know thyself, and trouble not thyself about thy neighbor, particularly his faults; lest in the bitterness of thine heart thou be tempted to condemn him; for thereby thou canst do great harm to thine own soul. Turn away, then, thy eyes, for God's sake, from any vices of thy neighbor, and turn into thyself, and see whether thou art not, or hast not been as deep in the mire as he. And if this appear to be the case, consider it in the order of Providence as an opportunity of reading thy own defects in the life of thy neighbor, and as a means of bringing thee to the knowledge of thyself, to true repentance and amendment of life. Then turn thine eyes upon thy neighbor, and pray to God for him, that He would be pleased, of his fatherly compassion, to grant unto him also the same knowledge and amendment of life. The man that is thus disposed, profits by his neighbor's faults, and is preserved from the sin of rashly judging or condemning him.

CHAPTER XII.

THE CHRISTIAN OUGHT DAILY, ONCE AT LEAST, WHOLLY TO ABSTRACT HIMSELF FROM ALL EXTERNAL OBJECTS, AND RETIRE INTO HIS OWN SOUL; THE ADVANTAGES OF THIS COURSE.

Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee.—Ps. 116 : 7.

THE soul of man, flowing out into worldly things, and cleaving entirely to the creatures, is like a wandering sheep. Now, the great Shepherd of souls tries, by all the methods of his mercy and wisdom, to bring him back to the fold, by emptying him of the creatures, and filling him with all the fulness of God. Thus the royal Psalmist concludes the 119th Psalm: "I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek thy servant." This expression, how oddly soever it may sound to carnal ears, discovers, nevertheless, to the spiritual man, the whole work of illumination and divine wisdom. For as the soul of man is placed between time and eternity, so soon as ever it turns to time, it forgets eternity, and withdraws every day further and further from divine things. But if it returns to eternity, then it forgets the creatures, recovers its liberty, draws nearer to God, and is thoroughly drawn unto him. For there is nothing dearer to God, than a soul abstracted from the creatures, and resigned to him. Then, and not till then, the soul enjoys true peace, tastes the food of life, and feels in herself the true fruits of that divine *anointing*, which denominates us truly Christians (the name "Christ" signifying: "The Anointed One.")

2. And if these things are so, who can doubt that it is the duty of every true Christian, if not oftener, yet once a day at least, to taste this divine food of the soul, which is God himself, that

thereby he may be refreshed with true peace, and be replenished with the fulness of divine life and grace? Wouldest thou, O man, but thoroughly consider this, thou wouldest be much more in love with heaven, than with earth! Wert thou but thus disposed, though the burden of a whole kingdom lay upon thy shoulders, as it did upon David's, yet it should be no hindrance to thy holy exercises. For the creatures are not in themselves hurtful, but are only so to him whose soul is in captivity to them; or, as it is said, "who sets his heart upon them" (Ps. 62 : 10), which ought to be entirely consecrated and devoted to God. Upon this foundation stood the Psalmist, when he cried out, "Lord, whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee." Ps. 73 : 25. For so great is the sweetness of divine love, that the soul that has once tasted it, despises sufferings, and looks upon the love or hatred of this world with indifference. They that are admitted to these joys, have perpetual peace in God with all creatures, whether friends or enemies. To these "the yoke of Christ is easy" (Matt. 11 : 30); for they are in Christ, and Christ is in them; and his presence makes their burden light, whilst he bears it in them, and they bear it in him. Therefore, such a believer says with St. Paul, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Phil. 4 : 13.

3. From what has been said, it appears plainly, how necessary and profitable an exercise it is for every Christian, once a day at least, to retire into his own heart, into God, and into Christ, to draw thence true peace of soul, and to learn there the true use of temporal blessings. For God does not forbid us the use of these, provided we walk in humility, and in his fear, and continue faithful in our attendance upon him. Our misery requires this of us, which in such a soul God will not suffer to last long; and so does, lastly, our daily cross, which Christ by this means makes light and easy to us. Not to say, that thou, O Christian, art continually admonished by the Spirit of God within thee, to sigh and pray for the love of God, and of God alone, and to grieve within thyself, when any worldly impediments draw and separate thee from it. This is the true and inward calling of the Holy Ghost, this is the well-beloved's knocking at the door of thy heart (Cant. 1 : 13; Rev. 3 : 20), as a living testimony that our hearts ought to be the chamber of our heavenly bridegroom.

CHAPTER XIII.

SHOWING HOW THE LOVE OF GOD ENTERS INTO THE SOUL, WHEN IT IS EMPTY OF THE LOVE OF THE CREATURES.

If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.—1 John 2 : 15.

HE that desires to become the habitation of God, must first divest himself of the love of the world, and then exercise himself in the love of God. No man can receive the one, without quitting the other; or be

filled with the Spirit of God, before he be emptied of the spirit of the world. As the magnet by a touch draws iron to it; so God first touches, with his divine love, the soul which he intends to draw and unite to himself.

2. Now this divine love is so great, that, like the sun, it shines upon all; yea, it shines more universally than the sun itself, displaying itself equally upon all men. So that it is not the fault of God, who is pure light, and pure love, but of men, if they do not perceive or enjoy it. For when God approaches men with the highest love, and most ardent affection, he generally finds their hearts full of the love of the world, and all uncleanness, that is, of covetousness, pride, lust, hatred, envy, and evil thoughts, which force him to retire and to withdraw his graces from them. Whence it appears, that since God is ready, like the sun in the firmament, to communicate the rays of his light freely to every purified soul, it is not His fault, but theirs, if they are not enlightened by it. As, therefore, we know these things, let us keep ourselves from the love of the world, and turn to the living God, watching diligently unto prayer; let us labor earnestly for the love of God in Christ, by which we are united to him. Let us knock at the door of his holy wounds, and from thence expect salvation. If we do this, God will open to us, and give us admission into that high state of uniting love, in which we shall be refreshed with all the treasures of God. And who can doubt that the God of mercy, the fountain of happiness, will fill the heart of man with greater and more substantial joys, than any which this perishing world can afford?

3. Whosoever, therefore, loves God, shall be loved by all the saints and holy angels. If I love God, then I share in the love of all the inhabitants of the city of God, a love that far surpasses the highest degree of worldly affection. And as all the heavenly host have the highest love of God, and rejoice in his honor, so is their joy proportionably great at every step of our conversion, and their happiness is enhanced by every advance which we make in the love of God.

4. Now one evidence of divine love is this, that we use the creatures with fear and humility. He that is endued with a habit of divine love, whether he eat or drink, or whatever he doth, doth everything like a dutiful son, with reverence and fear, having his eye constantly fixed upon the glory of his Heavenly Father. 1 Cor. 10 : 31. From this fear of God flow the many deep sighs and passionate groans of the devout soul, which, by degrees, raise him from earth to heaven. For he discovers so many corruptions and impurities in himself, obstructing the light and quenching the flames of the Holy Spirit, that he is forced to cry out with St. Paul, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Rom. 7 : 24. And truly, these sighs and groanings must frequently ascend to the mercy-seat of God, that by the assistance of divine grace we may bear up, and not faint under the manifold miseries of this wretched state, and the pressure of a vile earthly body. Thus did all the holy men of old time when they labored under the sense of spiritual infirmities: they raised their broken spirits unto God by devout sighs, penitential tears, and humble acknowledgments of their misery, which reverted into their own bosoms with a large increase of grace and spiritual strength. He that does not sincerely

seek after God, but has his soul intent on something else besides him, shall never find him. On the other hand, he that seeks him alone, in the integrity of his heart, shall surely find him, and be admitted to all the blessings and happiness that are to be found in the presence of God. He that seeks God in truth, finds God, and all things that are God's; and whosoever seeks for nothing else, and looks for nothing else but God only, unto him God manifests himself, and confers upon him all whatsoever is laid up in his divine heart, that the same may as properly be said to belong to man, as to God.

CHAPTER XIV.

OF THE EXERCISE OF PATIENCE AND LOVE.

He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter.—Isa. 53: 7.

WHOSOEVER would rightly prepare his soul for union with Jesus Christ, must, like him, be clothed with the meekness and patience of the lamb. Yea, he must have the very same mind that was in Christ, and become a lamb even as he was. Let this be thy rule and thy guide in all thy actions. He tells us himself, "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves." Matt. 10:16. This is truly thy case; and whatever way thou turnest thyself, remember that thou art in the midst of wolves, to whose violence thou art continually exposed; and against this thou hast no other remedy but patience, meekness, and submission, according to the example of the Lamb of God, thy Saviour, Jesus Christ. And as this meekness of the blessed Jesus was acceptable to his Heavenly Father, so also is thine, when by patience thou dost triumph over persecution. So that it is thy business to submit cheerfully to his will, whensoever he shall be pleased to lay his afflicting hand upon thee, either more immediately from heaven, or by any suffering which may fall upon thee by means of any creature. It must all be borne with patience, as coming from the hand of God; and assure thyself that the faithful Shepherd is at hand to seek and save the lost sheep, and bring it home "upon his shoulders, rejoicing." Luke 15: 5. Thus the patient soul is, by every impetuous wave of affliction, wafted nearer to God. But if thy blind carnal reason suggest to thee any excuses or objections against thy submission, hearken not to them; but fix thine eyes upon the exemplary patience of thy Redeemer; look steadfastly to thy crucified Saviour, who did no evil, yet suffered all injuries without thoughts of revenge.

2. Endeavor to acquire more and more the meekness of the Lamb, and, above all things, preserve the love of God, which cannot abide in a wrathful soul. And here consider well with thyself what that love is. Do not

fancy it to be that inward joy, that unspeakable pleasure, which sometimes elevates devout souls; that is not the essence of love, but the brightness of it, differing from its root and cause as much as the light does from the fire whence it proceeds. But the true essence of love to God is, to be resigned to the will of God, to depend entirely upon him, and to submit to every affliction as coming immediately from his hand. Thus did Job, who, taking the loss of his children, his goods, his health, and his honor, as coming from the hand of God, still "blessed the name of the Lord." Job 1 : 21. So, too, David humbly submitted to the curses of Shimei, as being ordered by the Lord. 2 Sam. 16 : 10. By this means the essence, the root, and spring of love, are preserved pure and unshaken; and by love we rest in God, and rejoice in all his dispensations. So that if it should please God to sink such a man with Christ to hell, he would not open his mouth, but rest satisfied with the will of God, in which only he finds happiness and rest. In this love true peace is to be found, when in God, and for God's sake, we love everything, crosses and tribulations not excepted. True love unites us to God, and to all the world: and the happiness of such a state is inexpressibly great.

CHAPTER XV.

SHOWING HOW CHRIST, THE ETERNAL WORD OF THE FATHER, PERFECTS HIS WORK IN THE HEARTS OF THE FAITHFUL, BY LOVE AND HUMILITY.

Examine yourselves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you?—2 COR. 13 : 5.

AS the faithful soul is often obliged to bear the temptations and suggestions of the Evil Spirit; so, on the other hand, it receives the divine consolations from the mouth of the eternal Word speaking in it. Of this Tauler speaks: "We know," says he, "that the eternal Word is so very near the ground of the human soul, that its own nature and being are not more essential and familiar to it, than that Word is. This eternal Word is continually speaking in man, though his perverse heart, deluded by the devil, neither hearkens nor attends to it. For the great adversary makes him deaf by his wicked insinuations, the love of the world, and carnal inclinations." For the devil to this day tempts all men, as he did Eve (Gen. 3 : 4), by those things which he knows to be most agreeable to our tempers and inclinations,—by riches, honors, friendships, our own nature, the love of the creatures, and infinite other ways, in which he influences and affects our imaginations. For as he is industriously busy about us for our destruction, so he narrowly observes the particular bias of our affections, and knows all the secret arts of raising our passions; and when by thus striking our imaginations, he has discomposed our spirits, we immediately

become deaf to the calls of the Holy Spirit and the Word. These suggestions of Satan we must oppose; for so far as we attend to them, we are the nearer to our ruin; but if thou stop thine ears to his insinuations, and turn thyself unto God in the centre of thy soul, thou hast already conquered him. And as true friends, united in affection, are particularly delighted in mutual conversation; so if thou sincerely love God, thou shalt frequently hear his voice within thee. "If a man love me," saith Christ, "he will keep my words" (John 14 : 23): not only those which he hears in the outward and visible temple and congregation of the faithful; but those also which are heard in the true temple of the soul, without which the outward hearing availeth little. And this inward voice of God thou canst not hear, unless the love of God be in thee.

2. "The most certain token of love to God," saith St. Gregory, "is this, that we receive all the adversities which God shall think fit to lay upon us, without any impatience in thought, word, or actions. If we do this, without doubt we truly love God; if not, it is certain that we do not love him sincerely, but prefer ourselves and our own things to him; though nothing can be properly said to be a man's own but sin; everything else is God's." Take heed, therefore, that thou prefer not even the gifts of God before Himself; whom if thou love purely and above all things, then thou shalt continually hear him speaking peace to thy soul, according to that saying of our blessed Lord, "He that loveth me, to him will I manifest myself." John 14 : 21. This manifestation is made by the opening of the understanding, by the illumination of the heart, by the spirit of wisdom, of understanding, of might, and of fear (Isa. 11 : 2), and especially by the purifying and enlightening of the inward eyes (Eph. 1 : 18), to see and know Jesus Christ.

3. But as the devil is wont to stop the inward ears of men by his suggestions; so he also blinds their eyes by self-love, by the love of the world and the creatures, and by inward and outward pride. For as by true and genuine love, we hear Christ; so by faith and profound humility, we must see him; for that only can purify our hearts from vain pride. For it is not without reason that our blessed Lord tells us, "Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God." Matt. 5 : 8. And for this cause it is that God sends us so many crosses and afflictions, that we may thereby be brought into the depths of profound humility, which is an exercise more profitable to us than all the delights and glories of this world. And now, though heaven, and earth, and hell itself, should unite their forces against thee, yet bear up with constancy and patience, remembering that all shall work together for thy good; as it serves to produce in thee true humility, by which thou shalt see Christ. Look at him, O man, and consider how he that is God (John 1 : 1; Acts 20 : 28; Rom. 9 : 5), most high and omnipotent, by whom were made the heavens and the earth, and who could easily again have reduced all things into nothing; yet for the sake of this wretched creature man, submitted himself to the most bitter sufferings. Phil. 2 : 5–8. Be thou, therefore, O sinful and wretched creature, ashamed of that pride, vainglory, and self-love, which have taken possession of thy heart. Learn to submit thyself to every cross that shall be laid upon thee, of what sort soever it be, whether

inward or outward; and so subject thy proud, swelling spirit to the thorny crown of Christ, that thou mayest imitate thy humble and crucified Lord by a true contempt of thyself; making this the great end and design of all thy actions, to be conformed to the meek and suffering life of the blessed Jesus, that so thou mayest come to an experimental knowledge of him. For what avail a few cold, formal reflections upon the sufferings of our Lord, whilst we are destitute of that meek and patient spirit with which he bore them? Of what benefit is it to entertain our fancies with a few dead speculations about his passion, whilst our hearts are full of pride, ambition, and worldly love? This, surely, is not the way to the true vision and experimental knowledge of Jesus Christ. The Spirit of Jesus operates most deeply in the valley of humility. And in this consists the essence of humility, that a man look upon himself and all that he ever has, or ever can do, as nothing. For if there be any good in thee, it is not of thyself; it is the gift of God.

4. And this humility thou must practise, if ever thou expect to see Christ. For the hidden mysteries and wisdom of God are revealed to the meek and humble, but are hidden from the wise men of this world. Ps. 51 : 6; Matt. 11 : 25; 1 Cor. 1 : 20, 26. For in this humility alone consist the knowledge and understanding of pure and divine truth, in which is the essence of eternal blessedness. In this the greatness of the divine majesty manifests itself, which the more clearly we discern, the deeper root humility takes in our souls. And the most certain sign of divine illumination is, that a man grow daily more and more humble, and be less fond of himself. For self-love and pride are the fountains of all the darkness, error, and iniquity that are in us. On the other hand, they that are truly enlightened by God, glory in contempt and sufferings, and rejoice to imitate their suffering Redeemer. This is the groundwork and spirit of Psalm 119. The royal prophet well knew that without such a thirst after godliness, no divine light and wisdom would enter the soul, and no divine answer be given to it. And this is the real purport of that long Psalm.

5. In a word, this humble and resigned state of soul, is that in which God particularly delights to operate. And he that has this, carries in his soul the comfortable presence, and in his body the suffering marks of the Lord Jesus; and considering himself as unworthy of the least of God's mercies, he uses them all with reverence and fear, having his eye, like a good servant, fixed on his Master; and therefore he is honored with His more immediate conversation, and grace.

CHAPTER XVI.

SHOWING HOW THE HOLY SPIRIT OPERATES IN OUR SOULS.

I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground.—Isa. 44 : 3.

IF after a drought and dearth of three years and a half (such as happened in the time of Elijah, 1 Kings 17 : 1; 18 : 45), it should please God to send rain upon all the earth, one man's field only excepted; he would truly have reason to think that God was angry with him, and that his case was most deplorably miserable. But how much more miserable and unhappy is he, who, though hungering and thirsting, like a parched ground, after faith, charity, and all Christian graces, yet cannot receive one drop of spiritual consolation in the inward ground of his soul!

2. But if this ever happen, it is not God's fault, for he is ready "to pour out his Spirit upon all flesh" (Joel 2 : 28), but man's, who prepareth not his heart to receive it. The best preparation to receive this holy guest, is to turn our hearts by faith and prayer from the world unto God, as the Apostles did at Pentecost (Acts 2 : 4); and whensoever God shall find us thus prepared, he will forthwith visit us with all the fulness of spiritual blessings. On the other hand, if the heart be full of the world, there will be no room for the Spirit of God to enter; for where the one is, the other cannot be. As in nature there is no vacuum, so it is in the spiritual world. Let this then be thy care, and this thy chief concern, not to fix thy heart upon any creature, either inwardly or outwardly, not on the love of thyself, nor upon thine own will, but upon God alone; assuring thyself, that this is the most noble and useful exercise for thee. As the finest work of the most skilful workman may be broken and destroyed by a heedless child; so it often happens with the works and gifts of God, which men destroy by their rash and unadvised management. Thus they break and deface the most noble designs and operations of the Spirit of God within them; they attribute that to themselves which is the work of God, and patch their own vile rags upon the fine linen of Christ's righteousness. For it is most certain that we are "unprofitable servants" (Luke 17 : 10), and by consequence can do nothing but what is unprofitable. And, in the same degree, as God is more noble than man, so the works of the Divine Spirit are more noble and precious than those of the human spirit. Hence it follows, that if thou wouldest have God to operate more eminently in thee, thou must surrender all the passions, affections, and powers of thy soul, to be possessed, governed, and directed by Him. For unless the creature be entirely still, thou canst not hear the voice of God. Think not then that every inward motion which thou perceivest, is the work of God; whereas some are merely the product of thy own flesh and blood. Take heed therefore to thyself, and learn to distinguish well, lest thou ascribe to God the very operations of the devil.

3. But in order to the more perfect operation of the Holy Ghost in thee, there are two rules proper to be observed: first, that thou turn away

thine heart from the world, the creatures, thyself, and thine own will and affections, that so this Holy Spirit may have room to act freely; secondly, to receive all crosses and afflictions as coming from the hand of God, without any respect or reference to the creatures, and to embrace them as preparations for receiving more plentiful communications of divine grace and blessing. Suppose, for instance, thou wert engaged in some good work or act of devotion, and some intimate friend should break in upon thee with abusive and reproachful language; if thou couldest bear this with silence and patience, thou mightest be assured that that was the work of the Holy Spirit, in order to prepare thee for greater blessings. But if wicked thoughts be suggested to thee, by the devil, yet satisfy thyself that they do thee no harm, because they are involuntary. Lastly, if thou art engaged in any worldly calling or profession, see that thou perform thy duty in it with thine eye fixed upon the glory of God, and the good of thy neighbor. By this means all thy works shall be wrought in God, and his Spirit.

CHAPTER XVII.

SIGNS OF THE PRESENCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN US.

The Comforter will reprove the world.—JOHN 16 : 8.

WHEN the Holy Spirit enters into our soul; that is to say, manifests his presence by his operations, in the first place, he forthwith reproves in us everything that is not divine, such as the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life (1 John 2 : 16), giving us a sort of loathing and abhorrence of them. Whosoever, therefore, lives a carnal life, without such inward admonition of the Holy Spirit, may assure himself that that Spirit is not in him; inasmuch as it is peculiarly his office and character, at all times, to persuade, draw, and invite every one that will give him room to act freely, to the duties of a Christian life. Thus the Holy Spirit reproves sin. But everything is sin, that opposes our obedience to the will of God. And every such act of disobedience, or inclination to it, the Holy Spirit reproves wherever he enters.

2. Hence, in the second place, arise spiritual sadness, grief, and inward terrors of mind. Of this the children of this world have little experience, though it is one of the surest signs of the presence of the Holy Spirit in the soul. But they that are utter strangers to this godly sorrow, who run on with delight and satisfaction in the way of the world, upon whom all things smile, and who find here their enjoyment, and never meet with any cross; these men, I say, are in a very dangerous state, and, being destitute of God's Spirit, are without God in the world. On the contrary, they that are afflicted of God, and are reproved in their consciences by the

Spirit of God for every act of disobedience to his will; and are led in the way of the cross, being brought under the discipline and correction of wisdom, are those in whom the Spirit of God prepareth himself an habitation. And this is the second sign of the presence in us, of the Holy Spirit.

3. The third sign is, that the Divine Spirit takes away from us all the glory of our own merit and righteousness, so that before the righteousness of God it falls as a flower of the field, and withers as grass, when the spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it. Isa. 40: 6, 7. For the Spirit of Christ shows us that we have no other solid and stable foundation upon which to rest, but the merits and righteousness of Jesus Christ. "Woe to our own righteousness," saith St. Augustine, "if it were to be tried and judged without mercy by God." For this reason Isaiah compares it to "filthy rags." Isa. 64: 6.

4. The fourth token of the presence of God's Spirit, is when a man looks upon his neighbor's faults with compassion, not rudely censuring or condemning him. For a haughty desire to judge others is diabolical, proceeding from nothing but pride, contempt of our neighbor, and admiration of ourselves. And where these reign the Holy Spirit cannot abide; but wheresoever He is, there a man is careful—1. Not to reprove his neighbor but upon urgent necessity. 2. To do it in the proper time and place, after the example of our blessed Lord. 3. Not to do it in severe terms, but with meekness and humanity. 4. Not to despise his neighbor, nor expose him to the scorn and contempt of others, but to do all from a pure principle of charity. Let these things sink deeply into thy heart, that thou mayest abide in humility, and in the grace of the Holy Spirit, and that he may dwell in thee.

CHAPTER XVIII.

SHOWING HOW WORLDLY PLEASURES DRIVE AWAY THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.—1 Peter 2: 11.

THE children of this world earnestly follow the joys and pleasures of it, which the children of God avoid with all diligence, as so many snares and temptations of the devil, designed to draw them from God, their sovereign Good. If thou, O Christian, resolve to preserve this most valuable treasure, be careful to avoid all occasions of losing it. Of this sort are all so-called sports, pastimes, and recreations, or those actions which do not in some way tend to the glory of God, and the good of our neighbor. And though thou art sometimes forced to be present at them, yet be then careful to turn thy thoughts inward, by an elevation of thy heart to God; and so thou shalt never lose the comfort and peace of the divine presence wheresoever thou art. And whilst thou art faithful in

this exercise, the world and all its vanities shall not hurt thee. This was queen Esther's case, who, though outwardly clothed with royal ornaments, yet was inwardly clothed with profound humility. Thus David, in the midst of his glory and riches, had, nevertheless, humble thoughts of himself. 2 Sam. 6:22. And Joseph, in his master's house, which was full of luxury, yet preserved a chaste heart. Gen. 39:9. And this is that true fear of God which keeps his faithful servants from the world and all its vanities, that they lose not their inward joy and peace of conscience. This "fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Ps. 111:10. He that is endued with it will not turn himself to the world, but from the world to God, seeking contentment, joy, and peace in Him. This, in short, is the fruit of true contrition; to turn us away from all things which are not God, or do not tend to him; and to turn us to that chief and true Good, which is God. If we are inwardly conscious that we have hitherto neglected this useful exercise, and have been immersed in the vanities of the world, let the remainder of our lives be spent in bewailing and lamenting our past transgressions, and in forsaking and guarding against every approach towards them. If we do this, God will not remember how great sinners we have been, but will rejoice at our repentance, not regarding our former iniquities, but our present faith and earnest desires of serving God more faithfully than hitherto we have done. But though God so earnestly desires our salvation, yet too many, by turning from him to the world, resist his grace and force him out of their hearts, notwithstanding all his gracious endeavors to continue there.

2. Therefore it is necessary that every man should die to the world, that would live to God; whence it appears that the major part of mankind are at enmity with God. Alas! how many mortifications of the flesh must we undergo before our corrupt nature, both externally and internally, is perfectly slain in us, and the life of God succeed in its place. Now crosses and trials are as so many remedies applied to our corruption, in order to drive out of us the poison of sin, and restore us to the life of God. Whence it appears, that the benefit of afflictions is very great, and that we ought to meet them with contentment and joy, as the means of purifying our corrupt nature, and bringing us to a participation of the divine nature. This it is which brings us to the noblest exercise of Christian duty, namely, dying to the world, in prosperity and adversity, in silence and hope, secretly and inwardly, without the least murmur or complaint. They who fret, repine, or complain, discover plainly that they are unwilling to die to the world, and that they have but little of the divine light in their souls. God cannot live in the soul which is not dead to the world; for the more we live after the lusts of corrupt nature, the less we live unto God and his holy will. On the other hand, the less we live to the flesh, so much the more we live unto God. Let this, then, be our certain rule, that he that would live to the Spirit, must die to the flesh. Rom. 8:13.

CHAPTER XIX.

OF INWARD PRAYER, AND OF THE TRUE USE OF THE LORD'S PRAYER.

Ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.—Rom. 8 : 15.

AS God operates eminently in humble souls; so the Holy Spirit particularly works in them the gift of filial prayer. Without the Spirit of God there is no true prayer; for he it is that cries and groans in the soul, being, as it were, its life. Rom. 8 : 26; Gal. 4 : 6. For as the soul is the life of our body, so is the Spirit of God the life of the soul, being the source of all its spiritual life and strength. This Holy Spirit is also the witness of our adoption and regeneration; and he who knows how to use these as he ought, relying, by faith in Christ and love of the Holy Spirit, upon the eternal love of his heavenly Father, will ask for, and receive great and heavenly gifts. For so great is the love, so abundant the goodness of God, that he can deny nothing to his children, who ask in faith. But as even faith and prayer are the work and gift of God, so we must daily apply ourselves to Him for the same. Hence arises the true internal prayer of the heart, from a true conversion and inclination of our souls and affections to God. This inward prayer pierces the heavens, whilst a man walking in the steps of his Saviour, freely and cheerfully takes up his cross and follows him; not like Simon the Cyrenian, who bore, indeed, the cross, but it was because he was compelled to do it. Matt. 27 : 32. So great is the love of God, that he does not stay for our prayers; but comes forth freely to meet us, and courts our friendship, entreating us to ask pardon for our sins, and to practise the same love towards our neighbors which he shows towards us. Happy is he, who truly knows, understands, and meditates on this boundless love of God in Jesus Christ. Such a man prays more effectually in his heart, than if he used the most perfect form of words. One single meditation or devout sigh offered up to God by Jesus Christ, in faith, love, and devotion, is more acceptable to God, than all the parade of external worship.

2. The whole life of a Christian ought to be spent in the exercise of love, and in the imitation of his crucified Lord. He properly is a Christian, who does all things from a principle of divine charity, and is transformed by it into the nature of Christ. And can God deny anything to so dutiful, loving, and obedient a child when he prays? No, surely. But that we might know how and for what we ought to ask, Christ has taught us the *Lord's Prayer*, a prayer full of petitions for the most exalted blessings. Can there be a greater good than the kingdom of God? For he himself is his own kingdom, extending to all rational creatures. So that when we pray, "Thy kingdom come," we pray that God would please to bestow Himself upon us, with all the riches and blessings of his presence. In this kingdom, therefore, God is our Father, manifesting his paternal love and faithfulness to his children, by erecting his kingdom in us, that therein he may perfect his

most noble work in us, expressed in this petition, "Hallowed be thy name;" which is done when the dignity and excellency of the divine name and nature are more deeply discovered in the soul.

3. In this kingdom, which is within us, he works his own will, without any impediment. And so his "will is done in earth," namely, in us, "as it is in heaven," that is, in God himself. Hence we understand, that what God desires to bestow, and has commanded us to pray for, is nothing less than Himself. This was the promise that he made to Abraham, "I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." Gen. 15 : 1. Moreover, our Heavenly Father gives us "our daily bread;" that is, he appropriates all his creatures to our use, testifying thereby the greatness of his love towards us. For the heart that is truly devoted to God, and in which he freely executes his own will, is capable of receiving the fulness of his grace and blessings. So great are the goodness, love, and mercy of God, that he can deny us nothing that is necessary either for the body or the soul; and he best knows our necessities. For this end he is daily setting our sins and miseries before our eyes, teaching us to abase ourselves before him, and to pray: "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us." For so compassionate is God, that he freely offers us forgiveness of sins, and teaches us how to ask it from the heart; that thereby we may be assured, that he is more ready to forgive, than we are to ask it; and that we may thence learn to exercise the same kindness towards our neighbor, that He exercises towards us. For they that are truly the children of God, exclude no man from their charity, or from the love of God. They have nothing more at heart, than the glory of God, the increase of his kingdom, and the salvation of all men. By this acknowledgment of sin, and petition for pardon, the Christian is taught, that in his natural state he is without God and his kingdom; void of comfort, poor and miserable. And, therefore, he is taught to pray, "Lead us not into temptation," by which the devil endeavors to draw us from the will and kingdom of God; but that he would "deliver us from evil," that is, from our own evil will and corrupt nature, which hinder the accomplishment of God's will, and the erecting of his kingdom in us, and deprive him of the honor due unto his name. "For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen." Whilst we receive these as coming from him alone, they still continue to be his. But if we do not ascribe them to Him alone, we exclude ourselves from his kingdom, his power, and his glory, not worthily sanctifying his name, nor obeying his will. And hence it follows, that we also are out of his kingdom, and so have no title to remission of sins and deliverance from evil.

CHAPTER XX.

SHOWING THAT HUMILITY MUST FIRST BE LAID AS A FOUNDATION IN THE HEART, AND ALL OUR WORKS MUST REST ON IT; ITS BLESSED INFLUENCES.

Be clothed with humility.—1 Peter 5 : 5.

IF thou wouldst build for eternity, let thy foundation be humility; for no man can of himself do anything. Wherefore, in all thine undertakings, humble thyself before God, the overflowing fountain of grace and mercy, and pray devoutly for his direction and assistance, that all thy labors may be entirely directed to the praise, and honor, and glory of God; and remember this, that whatsoever thou doest without the grace of God, can tend to nothing but sin and destruction. He that carefully attends to this, submitting himself entirely to the divine will, silently and humbly deploring his own weakness and vileness, and by ardent love devoting himself to God, shall experience in all the powers of his soul the wonderful works of God; while, on the contrary, pride is that vice which makes all our works vile and abominable in the sight of God.

2. And alas! why are dust and ashes proud? If we look into our original, we were created out of nothing; of ourselves we are nothing, more fleeting than a vain shadow; so corrupt that nothing but the grace of God restrains us from falling into the grossest sins, and sinking into the lowest pit of destruction. We are perpetually exposed to the assaults of the devil, against whom we have no security but in humility. For this evil spirit, puffed up with pride, has all imaginable advantages over the proud man; but flies from the meek and humble. Pride has its root in Satan; but so long as thou canst preserve thy humility, turning thyself to God from all thine iniquities, so long he can have no power over thee. How lamentable a thing is it then, to see a Christian, furnished with the Word and Spirit of God, so tamely give himself up to the devil. Such a one is like a cowardly soldier, who, though armed from head to foot, should suffer himself to be stung to death by a wasp. So powerful is the grace of God in humble souls, that if they will be true to themselves the devil can have no power over them. And if thou suffer thyself to be thus shamefully foiled, notwithstanding all the assistance offered to thee, what canst thou expect at the last day but the insults of those very evil spirits to whom thou hast given so cheap a victory. Consider well, therefore, what a grace and blessing humility is.

3. There is, moreover, in humble souls, a perpetual hungering and thirsting after the grace of God, which God never fails to reward by the fulness of his blessings, that is, of Himself: for he alone can satisfy the cravings of a thirsty soul. And on this humility is founded true repentance; for when a man sees the vast impurity, the secret malice, the deep corruption of his sinful heart, and bewails all this with sincere sorrow, he gladly lays hold of the free grace of

Christ by faith, and entirely resigns and devotes himself to the will of God. Such a man's sins God freely pardons, and, as it were, blots them out at once. For when a man turns himself from his sins unto God, God immediately turns unto him and remembers his transgressions no more.

4. Another property of humility is, that it cheerfully receives every cross sent from God as a preparation for greater gifts; it regards not the immediate agents by which the man is afflicted, but looks up to God from whom afflictions come. The humble man rejoices in the cross, saying: "Hail, blessed cross, unexpected indeed, but not unwelcome. I know that it is the will of God by thee to sanctify and consecrate me to Himself." And, lastly, humility keeps a man in peace of mind, as well in adversity as in prosperity, as well under the want, as in the abundance of the gifts and blessings of God. So that the truly humble man is always easy, whether it please God to give or take away, and nothing can happen to him, to exalt or deject him above measure. In him the wonders of divine grace manifest themselves. And whereas he before lived and acted by his own strength, he is now supported by God, and in and through Him produces fruit abundantly.

CHAPTER XXI.

SHOWING THAT A MAN OUGHT TO REST IN GOD ALONE, AND NOT IN HIS GIFTS; AND THAT HE MUST DENY HIMSELF.

Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, ye righteous.—Ps. 32 : 11.

THE genuine love of God proposes God alone for its end. It delights not in the creatures, but in that supreme, eternal, and uncreated Good, whence they proceeded; and this not only outwardly, but even in the very bottom of the soul. For the soul, besides its natural powers, by which it gives life and motion to the body, has a deep and central essence, having no relation to the creature. This is the seat and city of God, abstracted from all external and earthly things; here the Holy Spirit pours out his gifts through all the faculties of the soul, in the different manifestations of wisdom, understanding, and knowledge. But when corrupt nature begins to delight itself inordinately with these visitations, loving the gifts more than the Giver, it immediately pollutes them by corrupt mixtures of self-love. All the love and joy which result thence, are blind, vicious, and deceitful. For as the gifts of God are not God himself, so we must not place the same love upon both. Most men rest in the gifts of God, and upon the least perception of divine light in the understanding, or warmth in the affections, imagine themselves at the summit of perfection; not considering that they are yet far short of it. Man was made for greater things, even to receive God into the soul; and God is displeased if we stop short of this. There is noth-

ing he so much desires as to bestow himself upon us, and that after the most exalted and glorious way; and certainly the least we can do in return is thankfully to accept this divine love, and to delight in God alone.

2. But so corrupt is human nature, and so addicted to self-love, that it catches greedily at everything that may gratify its passions, placing its happiness in those delights, which, like Jonah's gourd, perish in the enjoyment. This satisfaction, though in the gifts of God, defiles them, and hinders His operations in us. So great, and so deep, is the corruption of our nature, introduced by Original Sin, that scarce one in a thousand can know his secret faults. Ps. 19 : 12. Hence proceeds that inordinate love which men have for themselves more than for God. This abyss of corruption, the most learned men could never fully fathom nor explain: and yet much more difficult is it to root it out of human nature. This rooting it out is the denying of ourselves, required by our blessed Lord, if we will be his disciples. Matt. 16 : 24. And yet it is much easier to forsake all earthly things, gold, silver, houses, and estates, than to forsake one's self: so deeply is this poison rooted in our nature! But as this self-denial is absolutely necessary, so God disposes and prepares us for it by various tribulations. This is the only end of all the crosses and afflictions, inward or outward, spiritual or bodily, with which he is pleased to visit us; namely, to bring us to the practice of self-denial.

CHAPTER XXII.

SHOWING HOW OUR WORKS MAY BE RENDERED ACCEPTABLE TO GOD.

Delight thyself in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.—Ps. 37 : 4.

AS man in his natural state is obnoxious to the wrath of God (Eph. 2 : 3), it follows, that all his natural works, how great and good soever they may appear in the eye of the world, are subject to it likewise. For, without the grace of God, we can do nothing that is acceptable in his sight; but if a man be in a state of grace, then all his works are acceptable to God; because it is the grace of God which works them in him.

2. Whence it appears, that all manner of gifts whatsoever, as St. Paul assures us, are to be ascribed to the grace of God, not to ourselves (1 Cor. 15 : 10), and that by our own works we can never be justified or saved. For though a man should suffer all the pains of martyrdom; though he should perform all the good actions that were ever done by all the saints from the beginning of the world, or that ever shall be done; though he should feed upon nothing but thorns, and suffer death, not once, but every day; yet could he not thereby, of himself, be able to procure the least grace. Depend not then upon thine own works, but upon the infinite mercies of God in Jesus Christ, with a resigned and humble spirit: and then be confident,

that the same Jesus will, of his free love and mercy, give thee whatever he shall see expedient for thee. This is the meaning of the saying of our Lord, "When ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants." Luke 17 : 10. O merciful God! how poor, how worthless in thy sight is our righteousness; it is no better than "filthy rags." Isa. 64 : 6. For all the works of good men would be of no value for our justification. Enter then into thy purchased inheritance by the surest gate, even the meritorious work of thy blessed Saviour. Offer up to God his passion, for the punishments which thou hast deserved; his holy thoughts, for thy polluted imaginations; his many divine words, for thy vain speeches; in a word, all his works, his poverty, his patience, his meekness and charity, for all thy defects and omissions. Keep thine eyes fixed on the blessed Jesus, and thou shalt obtain grace and favor with God. With the Prodigal Son (Luke 15 : 20), return to thy offended Father, and he will receive and embrace thee. His mercies are unchangeably the same, ready to be communicated to every sincere penitent. This he freely offers to all, and nothing is more agreeable to him, than to show mercy to him that asks it in faith. For "his hand is not shortened, that it cannot save." Isa. 59 : 1. And the more wretched and miserable thou appearest in his sight, the more welcome shalt thou be to Him, who is desirous to enrich thee out of his own treasures. The sins of the whole world, bear no more proportion to his infinite mercies, than a single drop of water does to the vast ocean. But as soon as thou art in a state of grace, all thy works wrought hence in thee, shall be made acceptable to God, through his only begotten Son, by whom alone we have access to his mercies. In this faith, in this union with the Son of God, thou shalt live. He is that living fountain that purifies all our uncleanness, and makes all our works acceptable in his sight. Zech. 13 : 1.

3. But still take heed to thyself, and remember that thou rest not even in thy spiritual privileges, which, as a child of God, are bestowed upon thee, but in God alone, the author and giver of them. Hence we are commanded, "to delight in the Lord" (Ps. 37 : 4); not in his gifts, but in his glory; that his will may be perfected in us. We must then refer all our gifts and graces to their munificent donor, even God. In order to use them aright, let this rule be deeply fixed in our minds. If thou hadst all the gifts and graces which God has bestowed, either in heaven, or on earth, with the good works of all the saints that have ever lived; as soon as thou beginnest to take an inordinate pleasure in them, and to delight in them as a property of thine own, they are immediately defiled with the stain and guilt of idolatry. For there is nothing either in heaven or earth, in which we ought to rest, but God alone. And when we do this, then God himself is our joy, our delight, our rest, our fulness, our treasure, and our refuge; and in this consists the fulness of blessing; we then become proper vessels of divine grace. For in proud spirits, which are the organs of the devil, God cannot operate; but "he giveth grace to the humble," as St. Peter tells us (1 Pet. 5 : 5), and filleth their souls with his treasures. Inward pride is the fruitful root of all vices. By this the devil keeps his strongholds in the soul, which God alone has a right to inhabit. The vine,

as to its outward form, seems to be but a useless plant, fit for nothing but the fire; and yet, under that mean outside, conceals veins of most generous juice. So it is with all those godly persons, through whom the Spirit of God operates: they appear in the sight of men as vile and contemptible persons; their appearance is humble, and void of external grandeur; but within, they are full of invaluable treasures, even living streams of blessing flowing incessantly from the throne and presence of God. But they who are puffed up with their gifts, who make a show of their alms, who build altars in churches at their own cost, adorning them with their own names, arms, and titles of honor; these, by displaying so industriously their good deeds to the world, have indeed received their reward. In the same unhappy state also are they, whose mouths are full of their own wants and unworthiness, continually desiring others to pray for them; not considering that other alms, proceeding from an humble, sincere, and devout heart, are a more effectual prayer to God, than are all the intercessions of persons who know that these alms are given only for display.

4. If, then, thou wouldest have thy works to be sincere and acceptable before God, observe carefully these four general rules: 1. Think humbly of all thine actions, not respecting thyself, but God alone. 2. Let this humility be deeply rooted in thy soul, humbling thyself not only under the hand of God, but under every man, whether small or great, from a hearty sense of thine own unworthiness. 3. Look upon all that thou doest as unprofitable and worthless. 4. Have a profound dread of the secret judgment of God, not, indeed, as proceeding from any doubts about the mercies of God; but, regarding him as thy best friend, be careful to avoid everything that may disoblige or offend him. He that despises these four rules, renders even his best actions impure in the sight of God. But he that carefully attends to them as the rules of action, shall be like a green olive tree in the house of his God, bearing good fruit abundantly. Ps. 52 : 8.

5. And we must observe that even the most inconsiderable thing thou doest, if it promote the good of thy neighbor, is acceptable to God; whilst he that employs not his talent to that end, shall have a serious account to give at the last day. This is the only use and end of God's gifts, that we should readily and industriously employ them for the benefit of others. Every action, art, employment, and profession, were given by God for this only end. And these are the works which, as our Lord tells us, "are wrought in God" (John 3 : 21); that is, in faith and charity, directed solely to the glory of God and the benefit of our neighbor, without any prospect of honor or advantage to ourselves, of which every man's own conscience is the proper judge. Consider then carefully with thyself the spring and motives of all thy actions, remembering that if thou neglect or refuse to employ the blessings of God for thy neighbor's benefit, thou must have the same punishment with the slothful servant, who was deprived of his talent which he had hid in the ground, and not employed, and saw it given to another that better knew how to use it. Matt. 25:26. Thus thou losest both the gift and the grace. No less foolish are they who pretend to things above their strength, who talk eloquently and fluently of what they neither practise nor understand.

Though these should confidently pretend to speak by the authority of the blessed Trinity, yet is all this nothing but empty boasting, unless they demonstrate that they experimentally know what they so magisterially inculcate.

6. Remember also, that no actions, how great and glorious soever in appearance, which proceed only from ostentation and vainglory, can be well pleasing to God. For as is the principle of our actions, such are also the actions proceeding from it. Whence it follows, that such as regard themselves only, are no better than impostors and hypocrites. Their best works are no better than painted sepulchres, which appear beautiful without, but within are full of nothing but corruption. There is in them no pure love of God, no desire to promote his glory; but only a certain carnal self-love and an insatiable thirst of vainglory.

7. The sum of all is this, that all our works, how specious soever they may appear, if they be directed to any other end but God, are nothing but vanity and idolatry. For he is truly an idolater, who proposes to himself any other end or aim but God. Wherefore, if thou hast any gifts, use them, but take heed that thy heart rest not in them; if it so rest, thou art guilty of idolatry.

CHAPTER XXIII.

OF THE MYSTERY OF THE CROSS, BY WHICH WE ARE DRAWN TO GOD.

He that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.—MATT. 10 : 38.

LET all that desire to be the true disciples and followers of Jesus Christ, bear their cross in this world, be it what it may; for if thou flee from one, another will meet thee; and do what thou wilt, thou must bear it. But under every cross the hand of God is with us, to lighten it and make it easy, and by his assistance we may bear it with pleasure. But when God withdraws his hand, then, indeed, it is a heavy burden. Now the Son of God bore a very heavy burden, and in the most afflicting circumstances; of which, in their proportion, all his true friends and followers have been partakers. Words cannot express the many and great advantages that are in the cross; forasmuch as God lays it upon us in mere love, that he may thereby draw us to himself, and make us "conformable to the image of his Son" (Rom. 8 : 29), and partakers of eternal happiness. The wounds in Christ's sacred feet, should teach us abstinence and patience: abstinence from carnal lusts and fleshly pleasures; and patience under all afflictions and oppositions, whether from within or without. The wounds in his sacred hands, should teach us silence and contempt of worldly things. The wound in his side, should teach us to deny ourselves, and seek for rest and joy in Christ alone. His naked body stretched on the cross,

should continually put us in mind, that we must be stripped and bare of all created comforts. For as Christ was fixed naked to the cross, and his garments were parted by lot before his blessed eyes (Ps. 22:18; Matt. 27:35), so, be assured, that if thou art desirous of perfection, thou must be stripped of everything which is not of God. And as every cross, however small, is laid upon thee by the particular order and direction of Providence, so thou oughtest to receive it with thankfulness. For the beloved friends of God have always the greatest share of afflictions. The devil always makes use of our prosperity, as the best season and occasion of our ruin; to prevent which, it pleases God, in mere compassion, to visit his children with a variety of crosses and afflictions, thereby withdrawing us from the love of the world, and disappointing the malicious designs of the tempter. Did we but know how efficacious the cross is in bringing us to God, driving away the devil from us, and entitling us to future glories, we should not only expect it with patience, but run out vigorously to meet it. For so great is the dignity, so transcendent are the benefits of the cross, that God has allotted it as the inseparable companion of all his chosen servants.

2. Did we thoroughly consider the benefits and honor of the cross, we should think ourselves unworthy of so great a blessing; for great is the honor of being made like unto the Son of God! He was never acceptable to the world, but was its scorn and derision. But now, scarcely one Christian in a thousand is come to that perfection, as not to desire to please the world. He that pleaseth the world, cannot, however, please God: and he that is full of the world, is empty of God. But so far as a man dies to himself and the world, so far is Christ, the true life, advanced in him. No man can please God better than by fully submitting to his will. If my prince should like to see me in one suit of clothes rather than in any other, I should certainly esteem it better than the most gaudy dress. And since my God is better pleased to see me under the cross, I ought certainly to prefer it to all the affluence and glories of the world. But perhaps thou art in doubt with thyself, whether the cross which thou bearest, has come from God; if so, let this be the test: Whatsoever thou sufferest for thine own sake, will be grievous and tedious, but if thou suffer for God's sake, thy cross will be easy, for God himself will lighten it. What matters it then, whether thy load be of the weight of a hundred or of a thousand pounds, if He but lend a helping hand, and make thy yoke easy and thy burden light. Matt. 11:30. Wherefore, O Lord, lay upon me what burden thou pleasest; only assist me in my weakness with the everlasting arms of thy omnipotence!—Observe, in the next place, that the choicest blessings of God are bestowed upon us whilst we are under the cross; and though they are sometimes bestowed beforehand, yet it is the cross that confirms them in the soul; and as it is so very useful and necessary to the soul, God has given a large share of it to his faithful friends and servants, and particularly to his only begotten Son Jesus Christ; the advantage it brings with it, making it tolerable and easy to be borne. Devout men submit themselves entirely to God, keeping their minds easy and cheerful under all the vicissitudes of life. Particularly, they take care to preserve hu-

mility, as the best guard against the assaults of their spiritual adversaries. Though God sent his only Son into the world, in order to suffer in his human nature, yet we expect an exemption from sufferings. But, be assured that if you would walk in the same way, and rest upon a firm foundation, you must expect to suffer with Christ, and in some degree at least, to have your lives conformable to his. Every affliction, how small soever, is a token of divine love, commissioned to visit us for our good. And the united malice of earth and hell cannot do the least hurt to a devout man trained up in sufferings, and in obedience to the discipline of the cross. The more his enemies assault, the higher is he exalted by God. And though he should be thrust down into hell, yet even there would he meet his God, and hell itself should be a heaven and blessedness to him.

3. When God sees a man too weak for a temptation, he refreshes him a little with his consolations, that he may not entirely sink under it: but he should know, that these intermissions are only allowed him in order to recover his strength, that he may the better bear up against a fresh assault. So it pleases the divine love to exercise men, that by various trials and temptations, they may be brought to despise all worldly enjoyments, and, like the panting hart (Ps. 42 : 1), may long for the fountains of divine peace and joy, the refreshing streams of life and glory. There the weary soul may drink and be satisfied, and quench its thirst in those rivers of pleasure which are ever flowing from the tender and paternal love of God. This is what the wise men of this world neither know nor understand. For the natural man cannot discern the things of the Spirit of God. If the children of a family should plunder the wine-cellar, and be intoxicated, whilst the father is asleep in his bed, how would he bear it when informed of the matter? Would he not correct their extravagance by wholesome severities? Thus God deals with his children. He allows them plentiful draughts of spiritual comfort, and refreshes them with his mercies, as with new wine; but when he sees that they are immoderately fond of it, he withdraws it from them, and corrects their extravagant joy, by mixtures of gall and wormwood, bringing them thereby to a sense of their fault, and of their necessary dependence upon him. They then begin to think meanly of themselves, and to bewail their vain presumption, which made them fancy that they could do and suffer anything for God's sake, whereas now they are ready to sink under a very small burden. We know that Christ led the way for us in misery, poverty, and contempt, even unto death; and we must follow him in the same way if we desire to enter into heaven with him. So great is our pride, that God sometimes cannot break it, but by some exemplary shame, which quickly brings us to our senses, and shows us our own unworthiness. This is the only means of bringing us to a true knowledge of ourselves. Many a man has gone astray for want of these wholesome trials. He that considers this as he ought, will certainly rejoice in shame and reproaches for God's sake. For whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth in this manner, in order to cure him of his arrogance and pride, and bring him to humble thoughts of himself.

4. Whosoever will follow the blessed Jesus, must "deny himself, and take

up his cross." Many would freely follow him, if they could do it without difficulties and sufferings; but these, aiming chiefly at their own ease, whilst they pretend to follow Christ, will find themselves deceived at the last. For it behooved Christ to die, and to suffer, and to enter into his kingdom (Luke 24: 26, 46): and if we intend to share with him in the glories of his kingdom, we must also be content to share in his sufferings; for unless we suffer with him here, we shall never reign with him hereafter. So, then, if we intend to follow him, we must cheerfully and contentedly submit to every cross, whether inward or outward, and by this means we shall at length arrive at the glories which he himself attained by the cross. How many do we see every day drudging in the service of the world; they venture body and soul; go into foreign countries; rush through fire and sword; and all for the sake of a little uncertain honor; and shall not we do as much to purchase the everlasting glories of heaven, as they do for the trifling riches and glories of this world? God manifests himself to us under the cross, as much as in the most cheerful spiritual visitations; yea, we then receive greater communications of heavenly joy, when we are most empty of worldly comforts. For as salt preserves flesh from putrefaction; so afflictions and temptations keep the soul from falling into sin and misery. And the deeper a man sinks into the centre of humility by the cross, the deeper does he penetrate into the heart of God, which is always open to receive and embrace the mortified and humble soul. This is the great end proposed by God, in all his various methods of humbling us; that, being sensible of our own great corruption, we may die to ourselves, and live entirely unto him. The saints of old, when under heavy tribulations, could no otherwise possess their souls in patience and liberty, than by a total abandonment and denial of themselves, being ready to submit to every cross which God should lay upon them, even though it should last during their whole life. By this humility, obedience, and self-denial, they were at last delivered. For the end designed by God in sending crosses upon them, being answered, he was pleased immediately to release them.

5. The last comfort under the cross is, that thou canst not be hurt by it, unless it be by thine own fault, by being fretful and impatient under it. Thou art very much in the wrong, if thou thinkest thyself injured by this or that man; they cannot hurt thee if thou keep thy mind steady and even under its burden. Be assured, that so long as thou art master of thyself and thy passions, the whole world can do thee no harm. If thou wouldst be safe, then, against the assaults of thine enemy, answer not again; be silent, even as a dead man, in his grave. Every calumny and reproach which the world shall cast upon thee, shall be as rays of light, encircling thy head with a crown of glory. How glorious are the three degrees of patience, in which true victory consists! The first is, to suffer without murmuring. The second is, not only to suffer patiently, but even to wish for suffering for Christ's sake, from a pure love of him. The third is, to rejoice in suffering; and this is the most powerful and the greatest victory of all.

PREFACE TO THE FOURTH BOOK.

ALL CREATURES ARE MESSENGERS OF GOD, INTENDED TO LEAD US TO GOD.

By him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him; and he is before all things, and by him all things consist.—COL. 1 : 16, 17.

THE eminent prophet Moses exhibits to us two powerful witnesses of God, in the book of Creation. The first is the universe; the second is the inferior world, that is, Man. Both of them, the universe and the heart of man, furnish glorious testimony in the Scriptures, by which the Creator and Preserver of all things is revealed, and also formed in our hearts.

2. We shall, therefore, introduce in this Book the testimony of both, that is, first, of the universe, and secondly, of the inferior world. Thus we shall learn that all creatures are, as it were, the guides and messengers of God, whereby we are to be brought to Christian knowledge, and also to God in Christ.

3. It is therefore unnecessary to attempt to prove that this Book also belongs to True Christianity, although there are some who might entertain a different opinion. If they desire additional evidence, they may find it in the passage quoted above (Col. 1 : 16, 17), and also in the Introduction of the Gospel according to St. John, and in very many passages of the Old and the New Testaments. Let them consider specially Psalms 19; 104; 139; and the words of St. Paul in Rom. 8 : 22, concerning the groaning of the whole creation, and in 1 Cor. 15 : 42–52, concerning the resurrection of the dead; in that case they will judge me with more gentleness and favor. And they will also assent to the Saviour's own method of teaching, who used to explain and demonstrate to his disciples and followers the mysteries of his kingdom and of true Christianity, by beautiful illustrations taken from the book of nature. But if they oppose the very Sacraments themselves, which are so many witnesses and seals of divine grace taken from the great book of nature, then I refer them to St. Ambrose, Basil, Theodoret, and others, who have written largely and learnedly upon the six days' creation.

4. Thus much may suffice in defence of my method and design; to which I beg leave to subjoin only this admonition, as the great argument of the whole, namely, that it is the duty of a true Christian to use God's creatures to his honor and glory, so that God in all things may be glorified, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

5. Observe the method by which the creatures lead us unto God. An

indulgent father invites his children to come to him; and if they are backward, offers them an apple or some other engaging present. This he gives, not that the child should be in love with the present, but be induced by it to be more fond of the giver. Just so God deals with us; he invites us by all the engaging invitations and promises of the Gospel; and not content with that, he offers us many great and noble gifts, "doing us good, and giving us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness." Acts 14:17. All these blessings are so many messengers sent from God to draw us to himself, and to instruct us how to taste the goodness of the Giver and Creator in that of the creature.

6. But so perverse is man, that his heart is set upon his gold and silver, his houses, estates, honors, and pleasures, which, however good in their kind, are yet in the sight of God of no value; they are only given us by God, to draw us to himself. For this reason it was, that God made man so needy and helpless a creature, that by the variety of his blessings and multitude of his benefits, he might draw him to himself, and teach him by these various instances of his love and goodness, that all the comfort and sweetness which he tastes in the creature, really proceeds from the Creator; and that he alone is able to comfort, relieve, and support us, when these perishing worldly comforts forsake and leave us.

7. But the greatest of all God's messengers, the most excellent of all his gifts, is the Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, in whom are all the fulness and perfection of divine love and goodness. His mercy is over all his works, and "by him all things were made." John 1:3. "By him all things consist." Col. 1:17. "He upholdeth all things by the word of his power." Heb. 1:3.

8. Having said thus much by way of preface, I begin the First Part of this Book, treating in general of the six days of creation, to promote the knowledge, glory, and praise of God.

9. Of man, we shall speak more particularly in the Second Part; and I intreat my readers to read the *Conclusion* to my Second Book, before they begin to judge me. For I again protest and declare that I desire my writings to be understood in accordance with the Symbolical Books of the Church of the Augsburg Confession, and in no other sense.

BOOK IV.

PART I.

TREATING OF THE WORKS OF THE SIX DAYS OF CREATION, IN GENERAL.

CHAPTER I.

OF LIGHT, THE WORK OF THE FIRST DAY.

God said, Let there be light; and there was light.—He covereth himself with light as with a garment. — God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.—GEN. 1:3; Ps. 104:2; 1 JOHN 1:5.

IN those words in Job 38:19—"Where is the way where light dwelleth? and as for darkness, where is the place thereof?" it is intimated that the nature of light is very difficult to be explained, and that its original is not to be comprehended by finite understandings. For though we know something of it by means of sight, yet it is but little; however, let us employ that little to promote the glory of God.

2. First, then, we say that light is a noble, subtle, and pure principle, separated from the darkness in the morning of the creation, when God "commanded the light to shine out of darkness." 2 Cor. 4:6. By this the world is enlightened and comforted, and all its beautiful variety is distinctly known and apprehended. By this, as some think, the light of life was conveyed into the great world, incorporating itself with every creature. From this pure brightness and glorious splendor, light and beauty flowed into the sun, constituting it thereby the great luminary of the day, which it governs and directs. Jer. 31:35. Whence, also, the Creator himself calls the light *day*. Gen. 1:5, 14.

3. But as it is the duty of a Christian to contemplate the works of God with spiritual eyes, so as therein to see the Creator, and by the work be led to praise the Maker; let us take a nearer view of this subject, and see how the light and the sun bear witness of God and Christ.

4. And the first conclusion that naturally presents itself is this: If God created so beautiful, refreshing, enlivening, clear, and shining a light; how much more lovely, comfortable, and refreshing a light must *He* be *himself?* Therefore, the commentator upon St. Dionysius, to the question, "Why God first of all created light?" answers—Because from his own essential light, the visible light almost naturally proceeds, as that which bears the nearest resemblance to his own nature; and therefore he calls light, a

little after, "the image of the goodness of God;" adding, that the light in God was transcendent and above comprehension; in angels and men, intelligible; in the sun, visible.

5. And, whereas God made the light, in order that the true external form and beauty of the creatures might be distinctly seen and apprehended, it follows that there is also another secret or concealed light, by which the internal form of the creatures may be likewise known, and from which nothing can be hidden. And this light is the eternal wisdom of God, which, being compared with the natural and created light, has been fitly called the brightness of the everlasting light.

6. Of this St. Dionysius writes in these words. "As the visible light directs, governs, and fills the visible world; so the incomprehensible and heavenly light, fills and enlightens all heavenly spirits. It also purifies the soul from darkness and error, and brings it into communion with the light of God. It is at first no more than a twilight, or faint glimmering of light; but when it is tasted, loved, and desired, then, in proportion to our love, it increases more and more unto the perfect day. Wherefore this transcendent light exceeds all lights, being, as it were, the centre and fountain of them all. From its fulness it enlightens all spirits; and, being the original of all light, it comprehends under it all the degrees of spiritual, angelical, rational, and natural light. And as ignorance separates deluded souls from the light; so the presence of this divine light, collects, unites, perfects, and delivers from ignorance and error, all that are enlightened by it: it converts them to the truth, reducing their various imaginations to the standard of pure and simple truth, and fills their souls with pure and uniform light." Thus far St. Dionysius.

7. In the light of the sun, also, shines forth the pure, deep, and ardent love of God. For whom did he create the sun? Certainly not for himself, for he needeth not the sun, nor any other created light, being himself a light infinite and eternal. It was for our sakes, therefore, that he created it; so that every ray of light proceeding from the sun, is indeed a ray of divine love towards mankind.

8. And as the eternal wisdom of God is likewise a bright sun, clearly discovering his mercy and beneficence; therefore, according to the nature and properties of the visible sun and light, it may also be called, an image of the divine goodness.

9. The created light determines the order, figures, and distinctions of all created things; for without it, the whole world would be nothing but darkness and confusion. So that upon this account also, the light is an image of the divine wisdom.

10. The created light, by its brightness and splendor, causes everything to turn to it; so the goodness of God draws all things to itself, as the centre and principle of all things.

11. The light of the sun is pure and spotless; so is the love of God towards mankind. Hence also the divine wisdom, being a spotless light, is, agreeably to this property of the sun, the spotless mirror of the divine majesty.

12. As the light flows plentifully and freely from the sun; so the love of God descends plentifully upon us. As the sun shines freely upon all, without respect of persons; so the divine love overflows upon all mankind. As the light proceeds from the nature and essence of the sun; so does the love

of God flow from his very nature and essence.

13. Moreover, as God created the external light for the world and visible bodies; so it is worth inquiring, whether he did not at the same time provide an inward and spiritual light for the soul. For God took not less care of the soul, than he did of the body. Now this light of the soul is God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost, the ever blessed and undivided Trinity, by whom our understandings are enlightened through faith. "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." Isa. 60 : 1.

14. Now as the sun enlightens the world, so does Christ enlighten the soul. "That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world" (John 1 : 9); and is, therefore, called by the prophet Malachi, "The Sun of righteousness." Mal. 4 : 2. St. James calls God, "the Father of lights." James 1 : 17. The Holy Ghost appeared upon the Apostles in the form of fiery tongues (Acts 2 : 3); and from this eternal light proceeds the light of grace, the light of wisdom and divine knowledge, the light of truth and life, the light of joy and consolation, the light of God's countenance, the light of faith and all Christian virtues.

15. This light is the chief beauty and glory of the creatures. God is said to be clothed "with light as with a garment." Ps. 104 : 2. "The glory of the Lord" (Luke 2 : 9), is also the beauty of the blessed saints and holy angels. The highest majesty and glory of the elect in the other world, will consist in light and splendor. "The righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father" (Matt. 13 : 43; Dan. 12 : 3); which is also expressed in the appearance of the woman clothed with the sun. Rev. 12 : 1. Lastly, as the light is the greatest ornament of this visible world; so the everlasting light shall be the chief glory of the heavenly Jerusalem. Rev. 21 : 11.

16. The more light any creature has, the more noble it is. This appears from the angels, the sun, moon, stars, and precious stones. So virtue itself is a most glorious light, and all the redeemed in the next world, shall be full of light and glory, and accordingly shall be distinguished, as "one star differeth from another star in glory." 1 Cor. 15 : 41.

17. Light is refreshing: and who can doubt but, when the day of eternal light arrives, the blessed saints shall be refreshed with joy unspeakable? Without question, the light of the everlasting Sun of righteousness shall give us infinitely more delight and joy, than this created sun, which only gives light to a world of misery and sorrow.

18. The light awakens those that sleep; so Christ, our light, rouses us from the sleep of sin. "Awake, thou that sleepest, and Christ shall give thee light." Eph. 5 : 14.

19. The light directs the traveller in his way: so saith Christ—"I am the light of the world; he that followeth me, shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." John 8 : 12; 13 : 46.

20. Moreover, as light has a vital power in it; so in Christ, our light, "was life; and the life was the light of men." John 1 : 4. "The Lord is my light and my salvation; he is the strength of my life." Ps. 27 : 1.

21. As the light cannot be seen but by itself; so God cannot be known but by Himself: "In thy light shall we see light." Ps. 36 : 9.

22. As the external light chases

away the darkness, and the spirits of darkness; so Christ, who is the light of God in us, chases away unbelief, and all the works of darkness and Satan. God must speak the word in us, as he did at the first creation, "Let there be light!" or we shall for ever remain in darkness. This made the Psalmist say, "Thou wilt light my candle; the Lord will enlighten my darkness." Ps. 18 : 28. "To give light to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death." Luke 1 : 79. "I saw an angel come down from heaven; and the earth was lightened with his glory." Rev. 18 : 1.

23. When the daylight is gone, the moon, regent of the night, arises with a pale lustre: so, without the light of Christ, man is nothing but darkness; and the boasted light of reason is but dim obscurity.

24. And as he would be called foolish, who preferred being enlightened by the moon, rather than by the sun; so are they much more foolish, who prefer the wisdom of this world, to the eternal wisdom of God in Christ Jesus. And as none but a madman would make use of the light of a candle in sunshine; so no man in his senses would think himself more enlightened by worldly wisdom, than by the divine wisdom. Strange madness! that a man should expect more light from the creature, than from the Creator, the Father of lights, God blessed for ever! Whosoever duly apprehends my meaning, has in him the beginning of the divine, eternal, and heavenly wisdom, which is the subject of the whole 119th Psalm.

25. As the sun is the ornament of heaven, so Christ is the ornament of his church, and of the new heaven, and new earth in their future glory, where it will be manifested to all the elect, that he is "the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person." Heb. 1 : 3; Col. 1 : 15.

26. As dwellings are pleasant, in proportion as they receive the light, so "God dwelleth in light." 1 Tim. 6 : 16. And the heavenly Jerusalem is described as full of sweet and refreshing light. "It hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God enlightens it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." Rev. 21 : 23.

27. As the light makes all things clear and plain; so there is nothing in heaven or in earth, no spirit, no being, nor the very thoughts of the heart, that can be hidden from the light of divine wisdom. Heb. 4 : 12, 13. Hence the Psalmist says, "Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance." Ps. 90 : 8. And "Thou understandest my thought afar off." Ps. 139 : 2.

28. As the light communicates itself to all creatures, and diffuses itself over the world; so God communicates himself to all creatures, particularly to men, delighting most of all in doing them good.

29. Lastly, the light and sun are a witness of the glorification of our souls and bodies at the resurrection. The glorification of our souls is, indeed, in some degree accomplished in this life by the Holy Spirit, according to the words of St. Paul, "We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." 2 Cor. 3 : 18. These, however, are but the imperfect beginnings, and first glimpses of eternal happiness; but hereafter both soul and body shall be clothed with everlasting light and glory. Hence St. Paul says, "There is one glory of the

sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: so also is the resurrection of the dead." 1 Cor. 15 : 41, 42. "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars forever and ever." Dan. 12 : 13.

30. Of this we find an image in the transfiguration of our Lord, when "his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light." Matt. 17 : 2. This was the heavenly brightness, the splendor of the everlasting Sun. So the face of Moses shone like the brightness of the sun, so that the children of Israel could not look upon him. Exod. 34 : 29; 2 Cor. 3 : 7. And this was the consequence of only a few days passed in the divine presence. How great then must that glory be, which will be the result of our eternal union and converse with him! The lustre of the face of Moses was terrible to look on, but the glory of Christ was refreshing and comfortable.

31. Rev. 1 : 14, 16. The eyes of him that had the seven stars in his hand, were "as a flame of fire." And the same Jesus Christ, who is the eternal light, shall so glorify us at the last day, that our whole bodies shall shine like lightning. Matt. 6 : 22; Luke 11 : 36.

CHAPTER II.

OF HEAVEN, THE WORK OF THE SECOND DAY.

See GEN. 1 : 6–8; Ps. 104 : 6; Ps. 19 : 1.

WHO can doubt that the admirable and pure structure of heaven, with all its wonderful properties, is a strong evidence and witness of God? "What are heaven and all the beauty of nature" (says one of the ancients), "but an illustrious mirror, in which we view the wonders of their Maker." For if God created all so pure, so glorious, and so firm, that our weak understandings cannot comprehend or explain it; how pure, how glorious, eternal, spiritual, unutterable a Being must that God be who created all? And if He has made so glorious a heaven over men, during their short abode here; how much more illustrious a mansion has he not reserved for us hereafter in the region of life and immortality? Hence St. Paul tells us, "We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven." 2 Cor. 5 : 1, 2.

2. As to the stupendous height and compass of heaven, to which the earth is in comparison no more than a single point; how does it suggest to us the immense and unsearchable power and wisdom of God? "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts, than your thoughts, saith the Lord." Isa. 55 : 8, 9. Does not its circular roundness remind us of the eternity of God? For of both there

is neither beginning nor end. Does it not also tell us of his omnipresence? For as the heaven surrounds and encompasses all things, so does the God of heaven support and comprehend all his creatures. "Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance?" Isa. 40 : 12.

3. And as, in a circle, no part can be called upper and lower; so God fills all things equally. Heaven and earth are full of the majesty of his glory; "He is not far from every one of us; for in him we live, and move, and have our being." Acts 17 : 27, 28. For though there are antipodes and many other creatures under us, as is demonstrable from the figure of the earth; yet by the wonderful power of God the heaven is everywhere over our heads, and we look up directly towards it, by reason of its immensity.

4. Does not also the firmament of heaven remind us of the constant, eternal, and immutable truth of God and his Word? For who is it that supports the heaven? Where are the pillars that sustain it? Or how does it hang, but upon the word of God? "The pillars of heaven tremble," saith Job, "and are astonished at his reproof. He holdeth back the face of his throne, and spreadeth his cloud upon it." Job 26 : 9, 11. And if by his word he has so strongly fixed the heavens, who can doubt that he will keep his word and promise to us forever and ever? If he support the heavens by the word of his power, doubt not but he will also support, protect, and preserve thee forever.

5. But, from this created heaven, learn to raise thy thoughts to the spiritual heaven (1 Kings 8 : 27), "where are fulness of joy and pleasures forever more." Ps. 16 : 11. This St. Paul calls "paradise, and the third heaven" (2 Cor. 12 : 2, 4); and "the glory into which Jesus Christ was received." 1 Tim. 3 : 16. This our Lord himself calls "his Father's house, where he prepares a place for us" (John 14 : 2); and lastly, it is called, "the heaven of heavens." 1 Kings 8 : 27.

6. Moreover, by meditation upon this external, transient heaven, thou mayest learn to descend into thyself, into thine own heart and soul; for there also is heaven, and the habitation of God. "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, I dwell with him that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." Isaiah 57 : 15.

7. Let this external heaven lead thee to the new heaven, of which St. Peter speaks: "We, according to his promise, look for new heavens, and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." 2 Peter 3 : 13. For though this visible heaven was created in such purity, by God, as not to be subject to corruption; yet "the heavens are not clean in his sight." Job 15 : 15. Therefore, "they shall pass away," as St. Peter tells us. 2 Pet. 3 : 10. And "they shall perish, and wax old like a garment, and as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed." Ps. 102 : 27. "I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new." Rev. 21 : 1, 5. "Behold, I create new heavens, and a new earth: and the former shall not be

remembered, nor come into mind." Isa. 65 : 17. How beautiful, how illustrious will be this city of God, this heavenly Jerusalem, whose builder and maker is God! Or who can declare the glory of that happy place? "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." 1 Cor. 2 : 9. Hence the Evangelist St. John describes the new and heavenly city by all the precious and costly things in nature. See Rev. 21 : 11, 18–21. In a word, this is that heaven in which "God will be all in all." 1 Cor. 15 : 28.

CHAPTER III.

OF THE SEPARATION OF THE WATERS FROM THE DRY LAND, THE WORK OF THE THIRD DAY.

God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear. And God called the dry land, earth.—GEN. 1 : 9, 10. *The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.*—Ps. 33 : 5; 104 : 24.

THE earth is a heavy and gross substance, separated from the waters, and fixed by the power of God to be the receptacle of all the heavenly influences. This globe hangs in the air by the power of the Almighty, and is replenished with the vital seeds of all trees, plants, and vegetables.

2. The stupendous structure and foundation of the earth is a most wonderful witness of the power of God. For by what pillars is the earth supported? Or where are its foundations?

3. Some have disputed whether the dry land be founded in the waters; or whether, as being the heavier substance, it sink to the lowest place so as to be the foundation of the waters.

4. The patrons of the first opinion build upon these testimonies: "He hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods." Ps. 24: 2. And, "He stretched out the earth above the waters." Ps. 136 : 6. To which may be added the testimony of St. Chrysostom, that "God laid the foundation of the earth upon the water."

5. Others assert the contrary, 1. Because the earth is heaviest, and therefore sinks to the lowest place, where it naturally remains fixed and immovable; for if the earth should move out of its place, it must move upwards, which is contrary to nature. And for this they quote, "Who laid the foundations of the earth, that it should not be removed for ever." Ps. 104 : 5. 2. They allege the experience of seamen, who sound the bottom of the sea; and explain those passages of the Psalms which mention the separation of the waters of the dry land, as Moses describes it. Gen. 1 : 9.

6. But on what does this vast ter-

raqueous globe depend? Who bears it up? Where are the pillars of it? "He hangeth the earth upon nothing," (Job 26 : 7), saith Job. For it hangs in the midst of heaven, borne up in the air, begirt with the waters, "Thou coveredst it with the deep as with a garment." Ps. 104 : 6. The air and water support one another; the clouds, though vast masses of water, are yet supported by the air from falling; for the power of sustaining is a property of the air. "He bindeth up the waters in his thick clouds, and the cloud is not rent under them." Job 26 : 8.

7. The stability of the earth in the waters, and in the centre of the vast expanse of air, is a very clear argument of the divine omnipotence; "Where wast thou (saith the Lord to Job), when I laid the foundations of the earth? Who hath laid the measures thereof? Who laid the corner-stone thereof?" Job 38 : 4–6. Thence, we learn, that the foundation of the earth could not be comprehended by human understanding, but must be counted among the infinite wonders of Omnipotence. "Therefore," saith the Psalmist, "will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled; though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof?" Ps. 46 : 2, 3. And that this is an argument of the wisdom of God is plain from Prov. 8 : 29, 30; where wisdom says of herself, "When he appointed the foundations of the earth, I was with him, etc."

8. And this is the earth of which the Psalmist says, "God hath given it to the children of men." Ps. 115 : 16. But though, as to its external form, it appear to be a hard, dead, dry, and cold mass, yet is it in truth, enriched by God with a wonderful variety of blessings, fruitful energy, and seminal virtues. These never rest; but are always active to produce fruits, adorned with agreeable forms, odors, tastes, and colors, with external signatures of their inward virtues and qualities.

9. So, then, from the earth proceed all the varieties of plants and vegetables, having exchanged their old attire for a new and delicate dress. The tattered garments of the preceding year being decayed and dead, they come forth with exquisite beauty, odor, and color, and, as it were, preach to mankind in words such as these: "Look upon us, ye unbelieving sons of men; we were dead, and are now alive again. We have laid aside our old garments and bodies, and are now renewed. Do ye also imitate us; 'put off the old man, and put on the new' (Eph. 4 : 22–24); being renewed in your eternal fountain and original, which is God, your Creator, in whose image ye were created. If ye do this, then in the day of the righteous judgment of God, when ye have lost your old bodies, ye shall, like us, come forth out of the earth (1 Cor. 15 : 42), with new bodies, clothed with immortal glory, of which our new-born beauty is but a faint resemblance. And whilst ye are in this world, take not too much thought for the body. Matt. 6 : 25, etc. Consider us, whom the God of nature has annually, for so many thousands of years since the first creation to this time, provided with beautiful clothing, as an argument of his bounty and goodness. Consider our virtues and qualities, which are given not for our, but for your benefit; we bloom and blossom, not for our good, but yours;

yea, the blessing of God blossoms through us."

10. Among the vegetables, also, a man may discern many thousands of witnesses of the goodness and omnipotence of God. Here we have a perfect collection of drugs and simples, an admirable and complete herbal; yea, a living one, not furnished with faint draughts and dead pictures; but graved with living characters and impressions, to be read by every curious spectator, but not to be fully understood by any, except by Him that made them. And till we come fully to understand their divine signatures, we cannot so perfectly know the wonders of Providence contained under them.

11. Every herb and plant has its proper signature, which is nothing less than the inscription and handwriting of God, whereby he has most wonderfully and beautifully distinguished them all according to their virtues and qualities; and in many of them, the outward form is a token of their inward virtues. The turf we tread upon is furnished both with food and medicine. Yea, in the smallest grain or seed is manifested the unsearchable wisdom of God. He has created nothing in vain, and the minutest part of the creation is not to be overlooked or despised, since we know not the thousandth part of its virtues.

12. But if from their external forms we descend to their internal, and extract their spirit by chemical processes, separating that pure essence, which being full of high medicinal virtue, is lodged by God in the outward body, as a diamond in a casket, then, indeed, we shall truly taste the goodness of God in the virtues of his creatures, and bless him with a grateful heart, for the many comfortable medicines which he has provided for miserable man.

13. Consider, moreover, how the bountiful Creator has provided not only for man, but also furnished "food for all flesh." Ps. 136 : 25; 145 : 15. He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of men, "that he may bring forth food out of the earth, and wine that maketh glad the heart of man." Ps. 104 : 14, 15. So that we may properly call the earth the treasury or storehouse of God, in which are laid up a variety of blessings both for man and beast: upon which account the Psalmist says, "the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord." Ps. 33 : 5.

14. A very wonderful effect of this divine goodness is, that *bread* sustains the whole body, so that in one single morsel is contained the nourishment of all the members of the body. And because of this nutritive quality that is in bread, therefore, the eternal Son of God calls himself the "bread of life" (John 6 : 35); denoting his power of nourishing and sustaining the *whole man*, body, soul, and spirit.

15. It is no less wonderful, that the greatest tree, with its root, trunk, boughs, leaves, seed, flowers, and fruit, should be contained in a very small seed; and that every year the same plants and trees, with their respective fruits and seeds, should appear in their proper order and season. All this must be resolved into the principle of the seed, containing in it all those powers, which successively display themselves in so great a variety of size, thickness, height, and breadth.

16. Notice also, how the grass, upon which the cattle feed, becomes food for man; being converted into the milk and flesh of the creatures that

eat them. Even our beds and clothes grow out of the earth, since both sheep and birds live upon the fruits of it.

17. I shall not in this place speak particularly of trees and plants: otherwise, perhaps, I should have taken notice of the fig-tree which was accursed by our blessed Saviour (Matt. 21 : 19); of the olive-tree, whose leaf the dove brought into Noah's ark (Gen. 8 : 11); of the palm-tree, to which the flourishing state of the righteous is compared (Ps. 92 : 12); of the cedars, and of the spices, of which Moses made the holy ointment (Exod. 30 : 23); of the generous spikenard, which is a type of the Holy Spirit, and of the resurrection of the dead, being used in embalming bodies, in order to preserve them from putrefaction; of the vine, and various vegetables; from which the Holy Ghost draws beautiful similitudes, designed to illustrate and explain to us the mysteries of the kingdom of God.

18. Of the fruitfulness of the earth, David speaks thus: "Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it: thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God which is full of water: thou preparest them corn, when thou hast so provided for it. Thou waterest the ridges thereof abundantly; thou settlest the furrows thereof: thou makest it soft with showers: thou blessest the springing thereof: thou crownest the year with thy goodness, and thy paths drop fatness." Ps. 65 : 9–11. That is, every month produces its peculiar fruit out of its treasury, the bosom of the earth.

19. This natural fertility of the earth has been very much restrained by the curse of the Almighty; hence the tares which choke the good corn. "Cursed is the ground," saith God, "thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee." Gen. 3 : 17, 18. Fruitfulness, therefore, must be regarded and prayed for, as the gift and blessing of God, without which, a man can neither plough, sow, nor plant with success: "for it is God that giveth the increase." 1 Cor. 3 : 6. Thus we are to understand the words, "A fruitful land turneth he into barrenness, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein." Ps. 107 : 34.

20. Let our meditations on the fruitfulness of the earth, carry our thoughts to that new earth which we expect, "wherein dwelleth righteousness." 2 Pet. 3 : 13. There the curse, to which the present earth is in bondage, shall have no place; it shall be the region of perfect blessedness and life eternal. This is the new paradise, full of celestial sweetness, joy, and pleasure: then shall we truly sing this song, "the flowers appear on the earth." Cant. 2 : 12.

21. I come next to the mountains, which by their height and beauty are no small ornament to the earth. The mountains are, in a more particular sense, the treasury of God, in which all kinds of metals are prepared. They are, as it were, so many chemical furnaces, in which the matter of all metals and minerals is separated and matured. It has been observed, that the best simples grow upon high mountains; and whensoever they are transplanted into gardens, they degenerate and lose their virtue. Hence it was said of Hippocrates that the herbs which he used in the practice of medicine, were generally gathered from hills and mountainous places.

22. The mountains ought to remind us both of the protection of God (and so the expression is used in Scripture —"I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help;" Ps. 121 : 1); and also of the Church

of God. "The mountains shall bring peace, and the little hills by righteousness." Ps. 72 : 3.

23. Under this head, also, we may consider the springs and rivers of waters that run through the valleys, adorning, enriching, and beautifying the earth. For though, in strict propriety, the fountains belong to the work of the fifth day; yet the royal Prophet couples the mountains and springs together, because the rivers arise from the hills. Ps. 104 : 10.

24. Solomon tells us, "All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again." Eccles. 1 : 7. Though the waters, passing out of the sea through the earth, are sweetened by percolation; yet they do not everywhere break forth, nor form springs in all places, but according to the order and appointment of God. So saith the Psalmist, "He sendeth the springs into the valleys." Ps. 104 : 10. And their continual streams are not only a great blessing, and a miracle of divine power, but are also an apt representation of eternal life.

25. If God take so much care of the beasts of the earth, shall he not much more take care of us? If "the beasts of the field cry unto him, when the rivers of waters are dried up" (Joel 1 : 20), how much more ought we to call upon him in all our distresses? And, whereas, those places are generally most pleasant, where there is the greatest plenty of springs and rivulets: so thither the birds generally resort, and "sing among the branches." Ps. 104 : 12. It is as if God had taken care to fill even the forests with their music, that so every place might resound with his praises, and that man might learn, even from the animals, that not only himself, but all creatures were made to praise and glorify God.

26. Natural fountains, of which some are well known as possessing healing virtues, should remind us of the fountain of grace and salvation, the water of life, even Jesus Christ. "With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation." Isa. 12 : 3. "With thee is the fountain of life; in thy light shall we see light." Ps. 36 : 9. "Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters." Isa. 55 : 1. "The Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." Rev. 7 : 17.

27. The 104th Psalm, which gives us a beautiful account of the work of the third day, takes particular notice of seven illustrious creatures of God, all proceeding from the earth, and all capable of a spiritual sense. First, he speaks of the earth in general; that God laid its foundations, divided it from the waters, adorned it with mountains, and watered it with springs. Thence descending to particulars, he takes notice of its remarkable productions. 1. The dew, wherewith He waters the mountains. 2. The grass. 3. Bread. 4. Wine. 5. Oil, or balsam. 6. The fruits of trees. 7. Birds and beasts: all which are plainly expressed in the 104th Psalm.

28. Thus he speaks: "He watereth the hills from his chambers: the earth is satisfied with the fruit of thy works." Ps. 104 : 13. Thus we often see with admiration, the clouds hovering upon the mountains, and dropping showers of plenty upon the hills, as "the bottles of heaven" (Job 38 : 37); and then God doth truly water the hills from above. Sometimes, also, he sends his dew, refreshing them with great plenty. Thus were continually

watered little Hermon, in Judea, and the mountains of Gilboa, where Saul and Jonathan, his son, were slain. Therefore David said, "Ye mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew, neither let there be rain upon you." 2 Sam. 1 : 21.

29. It is the property of dew to make the ground rich and fruitful, and to refresh the flowers scorched with excessive heat; whence, at last, the bees by wonderful art draw their honey. Sometimes we see a sort of honey-dew lying upon the leaves, as did the manna heretofore. Just so the Gospel is like a spiritual honey, the dew of the Holy Spirit.

30. It is not without reason that peace is compared to dew. Ps. 133: 1, 3. For as the dew is generated by the morning, so peace proceeds from Jesus Christ, who is himself the morning star, and the Prince of peace. Where Christ liveth, reigneth, and worketh, there is perpetual peace. "The kingdom of God is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." Rom. 14 : 17. "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God." Matt. 5 : 9. Such are begotten of God, as the dew is of the morning; and as the dew makes all things lively, fresh, and flourishing, so also does peace; which, therefore, every good man ought to beg of God, the Father of peace.

31. And whereas, in the last place, it is said that "the earth is satisfied with the fruit of God's works," it suggests that the Word of God the Creator, is still as powerful and efficacious as formerly it was, when he spake the word, saying, "Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit." So that all things, from the beginning of the would to this day, spring from the Word of God, as from an eternal root of divine blessing.

32. Secondly, the Psalmist says, "He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle." Verse 14. Nor is that the least of God's blessings; for how could so many wild as well as tame beasts, that minister to the necessities of man, subsist, were the grass to fail? And it is wonderful that when, in very dry weather, one would not think there could be grass enough to support the beasts that are to eat it, yet they still live upon it. Thus it seems to grow as much by night as it is eaten by day.

33. Hence, we learn how merciful God is to mankind, and how liberally he provides for our necessities; and, though the grass may seem to be the least and meanest of all the blessings of God, yet we cannot be sufficiently thankful for it. So true is it that the least of God's blessings exceeds our highest gratitude.

34. The grass may also furnish us with proofs of the Divine Providence. 1. He that considers that God takes care of the grass of the ground, cannot question, but that he takes much more care of him and his affairs, according to Matt. 6 : 30. 2. It may put us in mind of our own vanity. For "all flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field." Isa. 40 : 6. 3. It may also minister comfort under afflictions and persecutions, according to Psalm 37 : 1, 2. "Fret not thyself because of evil-doers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity; for they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb."

35. Thirdly, "Herb for the service of man: that he may bring forth food out of the earth: and bread, which

strengtheneth man's heart." Ps. 104: 14, 15. Now the very notion of bread implies in it a great variety of divine blessings. First, it reminds us of God's paternal affection towards us; for a father naturally cares and provides for his children. So Matt. 7 : 9, "What man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread will he give him a stone?" Let us remember, then, that God is our Father; and that we are needy and indigent creatures, subject to infirmities and necessities. So that our very hunger and thirst are so many monitors to lead us unto God; and every morsel of bread we eat, should put us in mind of the paternal affection and goodness of God.

36. (2) Let us admire and reverence the wise dispensation of Providence, which assigns to every man his convenient portion of bread, so that no man has reason to complain that he is forgotten before God. Heb. 13 : 5.

37. (3) From bread we may learn the wisdom of God. In Psalm 104 : 14, God is said "to bring forth herb for the service of man, that he may bring forth food (or bread) out of the earth." The bread which we eat is, at first, nothing but grass, which, growing up into ears, and into the perfect grain, supplies us with bread, which at last is converted into our body and blood. This miraculous operation gives us an image of our creation; forasmuch as even to this day he makes the flesh and blood of man out of the earth; so that we may properly call it our mother, and say that "in God we live, and move, and have our being." Acts 17 : 28. The nutritive virtue of bread is the Word of God. If God should withdraw it, then all flesh and blood would wither and decay as a flower, or as the grass of the field. Therefore, man doth not live by bread alone. Matt. 4 : 4; Deut. 8 : 3.

38. The specific property of bread is indicated in these words; "Bread, which strengtheneth man's heart." Ps. 104 : 17. Every other kind of food, by being daily eaten, becomes unwelcome to us; but bread never does. So that bread is a universal food, and seems to contain in it all the nutritive qualities of every other sort of food, all of which borrow their virtues from it; as the planets derive their light from the universal luminary, the sun. And this we may conceive to be the reason of the great virtue there is in bread, that, being the most common and ordinary food, every man might find in it wherewithal to support life, though he should have nothing else. In a word, whatever we eat or drink, ought to be looked upon as a miracle of divine wisdom and goodness.

39. Lastly, the strengthening faculty of bread, puts us in mind of "the bread of life," which is Christ. So we read in John 6 : 35. "I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." For in this bread of life, all the power of God is contained; because "it pleased God that in him all fulness should dwell" (Col. 1 : 19); "and that of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace" (John 1 : 16); and by him, "we might be filled with all the fulness of God." Eph. 3 : 19. Blessed is he that eateth this bread! Earthly bread cannot save us from death, but he that eateth of Christ, the bread of life, shall never die.

40. The fourth thing mentioned is "wine, that maketh glad the heart of man." Ps. 104 : 15. How wonderful is the love of God towards us, who is so far from desiring to have us oppressed with sorrow, that he has provided even

natural means to refresh and comfort us! And as for the dejected and broken spirit, he refreshes that by the generous wine of the Holy Spirit, drawn from the living vine, the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the wine mentioned in the Song of Solomon, "He brought me to the banqueting-house" (Cant. 2 : 5); (or *house of wine*, as the margin reads it.) This was the spiritual wine the holy prophets drank of (Isa. 12 : 2; 61 : 10; and Ps. 34 : 1; 63 : 11), which made them break forth into songs of joy and exultation.

41. Wine again was given by God to strengthen the sick. For wine has a spirit in it adapted to quicken the vital motions of the heart. This is another instance of the wonderful love of God; yet it serves to put us in mind of a greater; namely, of that most generous wine which was pressed from the bloody wounds of the true vine, the Lord Jesus Christ, and which is the only sovereign remedy for the diseased soul. "He washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes." Gen. 49 : 11.

42. Lastly, it was also given that the aged, whose lamp of life is almost spent, might invigorate the languid flame, and make it burn the brighter. This may put us in mind of the spiritual old age of the Church. For as the sight, hearing, and all the other powers of nature, are broken by age; so now faith is extinguished, charity is cold, hope languishes, and the whole spiritual body of Christ decays every day more and more. "When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" Luke 18 : 8. But God promises the faithful, that he will "renew their strength, that they may mount up as eagles" (Isa. 40 : 31): and he declares, that he will "carry them even to old age." Isa. 46 : 4. To which also belongs that promise, "They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing." Ps. 92 : 14.

43. The fifth thing is, "Oil to make his face to shine." Verse 15. By this we are to understand, the precious ointment used among the Jews, and other Eastern nations, when they were more than commonly joyful, or intended to treat their guests after the best fashion; and which diffused a wonderful vigor through their whole bodies. In this sense we are to understand Psalm 23 : 5. "Thou anointest my head with oil." So our blessed Saviour, when he was entertained by Simon, was anointed with oil. Matt. 26 : 7. He upbraids another of that name, a Pharisee, that he had not shown him the same respect. "My head with oil (saith he) thou didst not anoint; but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment." Luke 7 : 46.

44. So great was the virtue of these Eastern unguents, that they used them in embalming the dead; and by that means preserved them many hundred years from corruption; as appeared in the body of Alexander the Great, which was found in the time of Augustus, as fresh as if it had been interred but yesterday, though it had lain above three hundred years. And this balsam is a proper representation of that oil, with which the Son of God, according to his human nature, was anointed without measure. Hence the Psalmist says, "Therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows" (Ps. 45 : 7): and "Of his fulness have all we received" (John 1 : 16); which is nothing else but that unction by which he teacheth us all things (1 John 2 : 20), and by which our souls shall be presented before God wholly beautiful, and adorned

with the gifts of the Holy Spirit: "when this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality." 1 Cor. 15 : 53.

45. The sixth thing mentioned is this, "The trees of the Lord are full of sap: the cedars of Lebanon which he hath planted." Ps. 104 : 16. There are many remarkable things to be considered in trees; of which, two are more particularly noticed in Holy Scripture. The first is, that, whereas, they seem to be dead all the winter, yet upon the return of the spring, they are full of sap, and produce, first, leaves, and afterwards, fruit, in a manner truly wonderful, and such as no art can imitate. For where is the artist, who from the juice of any vine, can form a grape? The birch-trees so overflow with sap in spring-time, that men can tap them like a cask. In Ferro, one of the Canary Islands, as it is said, there is no spring, river, or rain; but there are certain trees, from the leaves of which there drops so great a quantity of water, as is sufficient for the inhabitants.

46. And whereas it is said that "the Lord hath planted them," we must understand it of his creating word (Gen. 1 : 12), by the power of which new trees daily arise to supply the place of those that die or are cut down. This blessing will abide in the earth as long as it lasts, because the power of the Lord is the universal source of all things that arise out of the earth. Now the trees, with their fruits, may remind us of that divine charity which ought to be in us. For as these freely bestow their several fruits upon man; so ought we to be affected towards God and towards one another; "that we may be trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified." Ps. 92 : 13. Lastly, they remind us of the tree of life, with its fruits, even Jesus Christ crucified; of which, whosoever eateth, shall live forever. Rev. 22 : 2.

47. Seventhly, the birds are a very great ornament of the earth. They build upon the trees and help to furnish our tables. "There the birds make their nests; as for the stork, the fir-trees are her house." Psalm 104 : 17. And "Knowest thou the time when the wild goats of the rock bring forth? Who hath sent out the wild ass free? or who hath loosed the bands of the wild ass? Gavest thou wings and feathers unto the ostrich? what time she lifteth up herself on high, she scorneth the horse and his rider. Doth the hawk fly by thy wisdom? Doth the eagle mount up at thy command, and make her nest on high?" Job 39 : 1, 5, 13, 18, 26, 27.

48. From all this we may learn that God made not the earth to be desolate, but has allotted its deserts and wildernesses to be inhabited by birds and wild beasts, that his bounty to man, and his magnificence might be made known by the multitude of his creatures; his omnipotence, by his works; and his wisdom, by that infinite variety of distinct properties which he has bestowed upon the creatures. "Every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains; and the wild beasts of the field are mine. If I were hungry I would not tell thee; for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof. Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats?" Ps. 50 : 10–13. What then is the sacrifice that God expects? "Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the Most High; and call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me." Ver. 14, 15.

CHAPTER IV.

OF THE SUN, MOON, AND STARS, THE WORK OF THE FOURTH DAY.

See Gen. 1 : 14; Ps. 104 : 19.

THE stars are bright heavenly bodies, fixed in the firmament of heaven by the word of the Most High. They enlighten the earth, distinguish the night from the day, and adorn the heavens; and they are signs and tokens of nature, of judgment, of mercy, of seasons, days, and years. 1 Cor. 15 : 41; Gen. 1 : 14.

2. "Lift up your eyes on high," saith God, "and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names." Isa. 41 : 26. We ought, therefore, according to his command, to contemplate these glorious works of his hands, and learn thence to admire and adore the power and wisdom of him who made them. For "the heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handywork." Ps. 19 : 1.

3. With regard to the magnitude of the sun and moon, St. Basil thus speaks in his sixth Homily upon the works of the six days: "I conceive that the sun and moon are styled by Moses great lights, not only because they exceed the lesser stars in magnitude; but because they are so exceedingly large that they can fill not only the whole heaven, but even the earth and seas with their light. And as they always appear equally large, both in their rising and setting, it follows that they must be incredibly large; because notwithstanding the whole breadth of the earth, they always appear of equal size."

4. If a man were to see a globe of fire as large as a vast mountain, or a large city in flames, moving to and fro in the air, he would look upon it with astonishment and terror. Now it is demonstrable that the globe of the sun is many times greater than the earth; whence we may conjecture how great and inconceivable a space in the heavens the sun must take up. Yea, the least of the stars in the firmament of heaven are very vast in compass, and are greater than the earth; and yet in the firmament there are many thousands of these stars, which by reason of their vast distance cannot be discerned by us with the naked eye.

5. Here human reason is at a stand; for no created mind can conceive of the dimensions of heaven. Hence it is that the Holy Scripture, speaking of God's infinite compassion, compares it to the greatness of heaven. "For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us." Ps. 103 : 11, 12. For though "the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord" (Ps. 33 : 5), yet is the compass of it too small to be compared with the infinite goodness of God. Hence the Holy Spirit bids us look up to the height of heaven, furnished with innumerable glorious bodies, all full of the goodness of God, and vastly larger than this lower world.

6. Moreover, the incomprehensible greatness of the divine power is manifested, not only in the bulk of the heavenly bodies, but also in their constant and regular revolutions; for who can observe without wonder and admiration, such prodigious bodies, not only pendent in the air, but moving up and down in it with constant regularity? And how great and incomprehensible a space must they have to perform their courses in, and at the same time so determined and settled, that they never exceed their appointed limits, nor interfere with each other in their revolutions? David truly pronounces, that God "by wisdom made the heavens." Ps. 136 : 5. How excellent, how transcendently excellent must that wisdom be, which can guide and govern the infinite host of heaven with such admirable order, and call them all by their names?

7. It is wonderful also, that these vast shining bodies should have, as it were, a motion in themselves, so that they cannot for one moment, stand still in their courses; for the whole heavenly order would then be disturbed, and the stars themselves, together with their motion, would lose their vital power, even as men die, when the motion of their lungs fails. The least star never stands still, but is perpetually in quick and inconceivable motion.

8. If the motion of one planet only be so stupendous, what shall we say of that innumerable multitude of stars, each of which has its particular course and revolution? And if any man could but for an hour take a view of all their distinct motions, he would be able to unfold to us very surprising things.

9. The consideration of the motions and multitude of these stars may remind us of those bright and invisible stars, the angels of God. This seems to be hinted in the Revelation of St. John, where the Son of God appears with seven stars in his hand (Rev. 1 : 16), which are the seven spirits or angels sent forth into all the earth. To this the Book of Job alludes, "When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy" (Job 38 : 7) : by which the writer leads us from the natural stars to the holy angels. For if God has created so great a multitude of stars, who can doubt that he has a much greater multitude of celestial spirits, who praise him without ceasing?— "Praise ye him, sun and moon; praise him, all ye stars of light." Ps. 148 : 3.

10. The revolution of the heavens is, by the all-wise Creator, appointed as the measure of time; in which appear the stupendous providence, economy, and wisdom of God. To this head we are to refer the ages of the world, and their distinct epochs, the ending of monarchies, the seventy years of the Babylonish captivity, Daniel's seventy weeks, the periods of kingdoms, and the times of Antichrist, both in the book of Daniel and the Revelation, with other things of the same nature, which wonderfully confirm and illustrate the providence and wisdom of God. And whereas our Saviour tells us, that "it is not for us to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power" (Acts 1 : 7); this is to be understood of such a knowledge only as was foreign to the duty of an apostle, not serving either to the edification of the church, or the propagation of the Gospel. The words also may mean that no time or place ought to be prescribed to our blessed Lord for the erecting and establishing of his kingdom; of which he himself is the only proper

judge. Our business is only to be witnesses of his kingdom, and to do our best to promote it, leaving the times and seasons to God alone. Moreover, the disciples at that time, had wrong views of the nature and design of his kingdom, and those words may be looked upon as a proper rebuke of their erroneous opinions about a temporal kingdom.

11. And as for the times and seasons of our worldly affairs, even these are under the disposal and direction of God, whensoever we devoutly submit our concerns to him, begging his direction and assistance; as plainly appears in the case of Abraham's servant, who prayed to God, that he would "send him good speed that day." Gen. 24 : 12.

12. Our blessed Saviour argues with the Jews from those signs in the heavens, which the common experience of the times had remarked (Matt. 16 : 2, 3; Luke 12 : 54–56), thereby leading them to observations of a higher nature, and putting them in mind of those signs which were to usher in and attend the appearance of the Messiah. The words in St. Matthew are these: "When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather; for the sky is red. And in the morning, It will be foul weather to-day, for the sky is red and lowering. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?" So that our Saviour's conclusion runs thus: If ye attend to the natural signs, and by the face of the sky can judge rightly of the weather, why do ye not attend to the signs of the present period, and conclude that the times of the Messiah are come?

13. The words in St. Luke run thus: "When ye see a cloud rise out of the west, straightway ye say, There cometh a shower; and so it is. And when ye see the south wind blow, ye say, There will be heat; and it cometh to pass. Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky and of the earth; but how is it that ye do not discern this time?" So that our Lord concludes thus: As by the natural signs of heaven, ye judge rightly of the weather, because ye see the effect follow; so by the signs and miracles which ye see, ye ought to be convinced, that the Messiah is really come. But, hypocrites as ye are, ye retain the one, and neglect the other, though of the highest importance to you.

14. As to the operations of heaven, we must first observe, that they have nothing in their own nature hurtful to mankind, as some pretenders would persuade us; but that our sins and wickedness are the true cause why God arms the creatures unto vengeance, and makes use of them to punish a rebellious world. Thus he punished the sins of the old world by a rain of forty days, which caused the flood. Gen. 7 : 12. And thus the sin of Sodom drew down fire and brimstone from heaven. Gen. 19 : 24.

15. In the same manner we are punished even at this day; sometimes by excessive heats; at other times by violent cold, rains, or drought; at other times by thunder, hail, fire, insects, or infected air, which like the fire that destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, fall from heaven. But as the Egyptian plagues had no power over the children of Israel (Exod. 8 : 22), so these punishments never hurt the children of God, if they live in his faith and fear. Thus it is said, "The Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand; the sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night." Ps. 121 : 5, 6.

The same Psalm advises us, to "lift up our eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh our help," that by the grace and favor of God we may escape these evils.

16. And as God makes use of the heavens and heavenly bodies, as instruments of vengeance against the wicked, so he employs them sometimes as means of protection and blessing to the righteous. Thus we read, "They fought from heaven; the stars in their courses fought against Sisera" (Judg. 5 : 20): not unlike to which, is the story of the Emperor Theodosius, whose enemies were routed by a sudden tempest of wind and rain.

17. The productions of heaven God in his due time dispenses out of his treasures, for the benefit and advantage of this lower world; God so disposing and ordering things, that the inferior creatures receive of the superior, and all nature hangs together, as it were, in one chain. And this connection of nature and providence is finely described by the prophet Hosea, "It shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord, I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth; and the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil, and they shall hear Jezreel." Hosea 2 : 21, 22. In this place the prophet presents us with the entire order of nature, beginning at the first cause, which is God. "I (saith he) will hear the heavens," namely, when, in the great drought, the heaven shall scorch with excessive heat, and the channel of the heavenly influences shall, as it were, be dried up, so that they cannot convey fruitful seasons to the earth: then I will hear the distress of the heavens, I will cover them with clouds.

18. And whereas the prophet adds, "The heavens shall hear the earth," that has relation to the secondary causes. For as the earth depends on the heavens, it follows, that when the operations of the heavens are, as it were, hindered, the earth can produce nothing that is good. And when the earth is broken or chapped by excessive heat, it, as it were, opens its mouth and entreats for rain. "And the earth shall hear the corn, and wine, and oil;" that is, forasmuch as the vegetables depend upon the earth for their moisture; therefore, whensoever the earth is dry and cannot supply them with nourishment, the vegetables solicit moisture of it, as a thirsty infant would appeal to its mother.

19. I proceed, next, to the benefits which God bestows upon us by the light of the sun and moon. And these we must consider in the fear of God, and show how we may enjoy and use them, both in a natural and spiritual sense. "Tell me (saith God to Job), where is the way where light dwelleth? and as for darkness, where is the place thereof? Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion? Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth in his season, or canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons? Knowest thou the ordinances of heaven? Canst thou set the dominion thereof in the earth? Canst thou lift up thy voice to the clouds, that abundance of waters may cover thee?" Job 38 : 19, 31–34. In these words God represents to us his infinite power and wisdom, such as no mortal can search out or account for, much less imitate. For so unable is the wisest man to form light or darkness, that he cannot so much as produce a blade of grass. "Not unto us (then), O Lord, not unto us, but unto

thy name give glory" (Ps. 115:1); for thou hast made all these things, and thy hand hath formed them. "He appointed the moon for seasons; the sun knoweth his going down" (Ps. 104:19); alluding to the work of the fourth day, when God said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of heaven, to divide the day from the night: and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and for years. And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night; he made the stars also." Gen. 1:14–16.

20. How wonderful is the increase and decrease of the moon; sometimes it seems to be shut up in darkness, and again, in its season, to emerge by degrees into a fulness of light. And these varieties God hath appointed for a regular distinction of the times and seasons of the year, and of the affairs and business of mankind. Without this distinction of the months and other divisions of time, there could be no order in the church of God, or in civil governments, or in the economy of private families; but all would be disorder and confusion.

21. And how abundantly is the wisdom of God displayed, even in this certain course of the moon, and distinction of seasons! In all states and conditions, the chief part of prudence is to preserve good order, and to observe the proper opportunities of acting; these are the distinguishing accomplishments of a wise ruler, and of a prudent head of a family. This, indeed, is the principal thing to be regarded in every action; he that acts unseasonably, acts to little or no purpose. God himself hath ordered all things in measure, and number, and weight; and every season has its proper opportunities and blessings attending it. "To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven." Eccles. 3:1. And as the choosing of the proper season is truly a happiness, so it is also a blessing from God, of whom, therefore, we ought to ask it by prayer.

22. By the words, "The sun knoweth his going down" (Ps. 104:19); the royal prophet suggests to us the seasons of the year, spring, summer, autumn, winter, and the distinguishing of days, being some longer, and some shorter; all which are of very great use to mankind.

23. And who can consider these amazing acts of divine power and wisdom, without admiration and praise to the Author of nature? This astonishing order of nature appeared so glorious to the ancient heathens, that they worshipped even the sun for their God, as being the greatest and most splendid of all objects, and as enlightening all the world. This was a conclusion for blind, corrupt reason to draw, though every part of the creation, to pure and right reason, fully manifests and discovers the being and excellencies of the Creator. A certain Indian king having heard of Jesus Christ, and the necessity of believing in him, because he died for us, gave this answer: "For my part, I had rather believe in the sun that never dies, than in a mortal God." This was the effect of human blindness, against the corrupt influences and prejudices of which, God has taken particular care to warn us: "Lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, and when thou seest the sun, and the moon, and the stars, even all the host of heaven, shouldest be driven to worship them, and serve them, which the Lord thy God hath divided unto all

nations under the whole heaven." Deut. 4 : 19.

24. As to the magnitude of the sun, moon, and stars, it is an error to imagine that they are really no larger than they appear to us. For though the moon and some of the planets are less than the earth, yet the sun may be plainly and infallibly demonstrated to be many times larger; and that it appears so small to us, is owing to the immensity of its distance. Ocular demonstration convinces every man of this, that the more remote any object is, the less it appears. A nice disquisition of these matters the unlearned must leave to astronomers, and be content religiously to admire what they do not understand.

25. And, here, how ought we to magnify and adore the omnipotence and wisdom of God, who appointed the sun to be the light and ornament of the day, and the moon of the night. For light is the highest beauty of all things. If we highly admire a well-built house with a fair prospect, furnished with good statues and pictures, and painted with great variety of colors, how much more ought we to look up with gratitude and astonishment to heaven, adorned with lights so many, and so stupendous.

26. How profound is the wisdom of God, who "telleth the number of the stars, and calleth them all by their names" (Ps. 147 : 4, 5); to which is immediately subjoined, "Great is our Lord, and of great power; his understanding is infinite." How ought we then to depend upon this wisdom, and be satisfied with all its determinations concerning us, and not charge him with folly, by pretending to be wiser than He is! "For the foolishness of God is wiser than men." 1 Cor. 1 : 25.

27. The certain and regular course of the sun and moon, reminds us of the truth of God, and the certainty of his promises: such are those of sending the Messiah, of the revolutions of certain states and kingdoms, and other deliverances of mankind; all which appeared in their time. Thus saith the Lord by the prophet Jeremiah, "If my covenant be not with day and night, and if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth; and if ye can break my covenant, that there should not be day and night in their season; then may also my covenant be broken with David my servant." Jer. 33 : 20, 21, 25.

28. At our blessed Saviour's passion, the darkness that overspread the world did, as it were, represent the terrors of his death, and all those barbarous impieties that were acted against him (Matt. 27 : 45); for the sun and moon were then as mirrors, in which might be read the sins and iniquities of mankind; which, like the sin of Sodom, mounted up to heaven, and drew down vengeance upon the world. Gen. 18 : 20. So every eclipse of the sun points out to us that internal and spiritual blindness of heart which reigns in every one of us; and that as plainly as if a voice should call to us, saying, "Look upon me, for you yourselves are in the same condition." And when the heaven is red as blood, and seems to be on fire, it appears to speak to us in words like these: "Look up to me, and think on that day when I shall burn with real flames." So, in short, we may consider all things as upbraiding us with our iniquities, and warning us to repent. What is the thunder, but the terrible voice of heaven, at which the earth trembles, and by which God speaks to the impenitent world? What is an earthquake, but a lecture of repentance?

The same may be said of storms and tempests at sea, and of all disorders in the inanimate creation.

29. The sun, moon, and stars, are witnesses of the divine goodness, and of that eternal light which enlightens, comforts, and refreshes every man that cometh into the world. For as God is in himself invisible and incomprehensible, we should, by the direction of the natural light, aspire to the knowledge of Him that made it; and by the beauty of the created, be drawn to the love of the uncreated light. And as we naturally take pleasure in the outward light, as the most beautiful object in the creation; so ought we, with our whole hearts, to love Him who is light eternal, and to walk and rejoice in his light, by withdrawing ourselves from the darkness of sin. "For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial?" 2 Cor. 6 : 14, 15.

26. Lastly, the visible sun should put us in mind of Jesus Christ, the spiritual and eternal "Sun of righteousness." Mal. 4 : 2. For as that shines equally upon all men; so Christ freely bestows himself, and the light of his grace, upon all that will receive him. Thus he saith, "I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." John 8 : 12.

CHAPTER V.

OF THE WATERS, AND THEIR PRODUCTIONS, THE WORK OF THE FIFTH DAY.

See Gen. 1 : 20–22; Ps. 104 : 25.

THAT is unquestionably the best philosophy which gives the best account of the works of God. And this knowledge every true lover of God ought to seek, that he may thereby know how many glorious creatures God has created for our use and benefit. Let the pretenders to philosophy look to it, that they spend not their time in inquiries, which, instead of teaching them true knowledge, lead them into ignorance and forgetfulness of God and his creatures.

2. The first thing to be observed and admired, is the mutual relation subsisting between the different parts of created nature. Thus the heavens generate rains, dews, winds, and cooling breezes in the air; and then send them down to us. So the earth produces its fruits in the air; and they bud, blossom, and ripen, and are nourished by the air, without which they would quickly languish and die.

3. Among the productions of the watery element, are the rivers. In one place springs up the Rhine, in another the Danube; here is the Elbe, there the Nile. As from one bough of a great and fruitful tree, spring many little branches, and much fruit; so one great branch of the world of waters, as the Rhine or the Danube, is connected with rivulets, lakes, and fountains, which all flow into it.

4. As for the living creatures that

arise from the sea, they are without number, God having blessed it with so great fruitfulness, both for its vast extent, and the use and benefit of mankind, that out of this vast repository there arise, at certain seasons, prodigious quantities of fish, varying in their kinds every month. For such is the nature of sea-fish, that they are not to be caught except at certain seasons.

5. And here it is observable, that the sea and all its productions, have their proper order, time, and motion, appointed to them by God. So in the heavens, the stars have their stated times, regular order, motion, rising, and setting. The earth at certain seasons produces different fruits and vegetables; and, in that sense, is in perpetual motion, and never rests until it has brought forth all its fruits. So likewise the sea has its laws of motion, flux and reflux, and produces all its fruits at such appointed seasons as may best serve the use and benefit of man.

6. Let us now take a survey of the wonderful power and wisdom of God in the sea, and inquire what spiritual inferences may be drawn from it. "Who hath shut up the sea with doors," saith God to Job, "when it brake forth, as if it had issued out of the womb? When I made the cloud the garment thereof, and thick darkness a swaddling band for it, and brake up for it my decreed place, and set bars and doors, and said, Hitherto shalt thou come, and no further; and here shall thy proud waves be stayed? Hast thou entered into the springs of the sea? or hast thou walked in the search of the depth?" Job 38: 8–11, 16. In these words, God points out the great and dreadful ocean as an obscure image and resemblance of his unsearchable and incomprehensible power. For it is a very surprising miracle, that God should by his word alone, as with bars and doors, inclose the sea so strongly, that it should not be able to overflow its bounds. No less wonderful is its ebbing and flowing; so that the sea, being, as it were, conscious and mindful of the divine command, so soon as it touches the earth, seems to fly back and retire in a fright, as at the presence of God himself, like Jordan and the Red Sea. Josh. 3: 16; Ps. 114: 3. "He gathereth the waters of the sea together, as a heap; he layeth up the deep in storehouses." Ps. 33: 7.

7. God tells Job, that he has "made the clouds to be the garment thereof, and thick darkness a swaddling band for it" (Job 38: 9); which plainly appears, when its waves roll and toss themselves up to the clouds, that, as it were, receive them into their embraces, and cover them with darkness and horror, so that they seem to be blended with each other. Then appear the mighty wonders of God, which a man cannot behold without fear and astonishment, as it is described in Psalm 107: 25, etc.

8. To this work of the fifth day, belongs also that passage of the Psalmist: "So is this great and wide sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts. There go the ships; there is that leviathan whom thou hast made to play therein." Ps. 104: 25, 26.

9. As for the greatness of the sea, who can but admire the power of God, which, notwithstanding that so much water flows into the sea every day, and has, from the beginning, yet suffers not its waters to exceed their appointed quantity? And though its waves sometimes rage and swell, and lift themselves like mountains; yet are

they quickly put at rest, and settled within their proper bounds. These are clear demonstrations of the mighty power of God.

10. Here too we may not improperly speak of the islands. Who can behold, without wonder, several large and populous countries, and entire kingdoms, lying in the midst of the sea, as if they had been planted there? Who can tell on what foundations they are built, and what it is that keeps them immovable in the midst of violent storms and tempests? Some of them, encompassed with vast rocks growing out of the sea, seem to be built and founded on them. Upon the whole, their fruitfulness, tillage, and the occasion and manner of their being peopled, are what we may rather admire than understand. So that the sea is as populous as the earth. For as the earth is much less than the sea, it is probable that God would not suffer the greatest part of the globe to be uninhabited, and therefore he planted it with islands: so that none of the miracles and blessings which he works in the sea, might escape the observation of mankind. Therefore, to these islanders also did he send the Gospel of truth, by his holy Apostles, "shaking both the sea and the dry land, after the Desire of all nations was come." Hag. 2 : 6, 7.

11. No less wonderful is the vast multitude of creatures that inhabit the sea; for some affirm that there is as great abundance and variety of them in the sea, as on the land. Who can behold without astonishment, prodigious shoals of fish rising from the depths of the sea, like a flock of sheep, and offering themselves to the use and necessities of mankind? So that the sea is a great storehouse of God, out of which he feeds the greatest part of mankind, and out of which, too, he produces many other excellent works, such as pearls, amber, and coral.

12. I might here mention the many bold voyages that have been performed within the memory of us and our fathers, to the most distant parts of the East and West; and all this chiefly by the assistance of the magnet, which seems to have nothing in it either of beauty or use, and yet the greatest things are performed by it. By this the pilot steers his ship, and keeps his way in the pathless waters; and by constantly pointing to the pole, it guides the mariner to his intended port. Of these voyages, and of the islands, countries, people, and other useful discoveries, there are many volumes extant, to which I refer the reader.

13. The huge whales, mentioned by David (Ps. 104 : 26), give us a great idea of the mighty power of God. Of this God himself takes notice when he talks with Job: "His bones are as strong pieces of brass; his bones are like bars of iron. He is the chief of the ways of God. He drinketh up a river and hasteth not: he trusteth that he can draw up Jordan into his mouth. By his neesings a light doth shine, and his eyes are like the eyelids of the morning. Out of his mouth go burning lamps, and sparks of fire leap out. Out of his nostrils goeth smoke, and a flame goeth out of his mouth. When he raiseth up himself, the mighty are afraid; by reason of breakings they purify themselves. He maketh the deep to boil like a pot: he maketh the sea like a pot of ointment." Job 40 : 18, 19, 23; 41 : 18–21, 25, 31.

14. Thus much for the greatness of the sea; which is a very striking illustration of the power of God.

"Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand?" saith Isaiah. Isa. 40:12. To which the Psalmist answers, "Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did he in heaven and in the earth, in the seas and all deep places." Ps. 135:6. All that remains is, to praise, honor, and glorify the wisdom of God, which is so wonderfully manifested in the deep; the riches of his goodness in that vast variety of fishes, and other productions of the sea, for the use and benefit of man; and in a word, to adore and magnify him in all his works.

15. Let us consider how this doctrine of the sea may bring to our remembrance that twofold sea mentioned in Scripture: the sea of affliction and misery, and the sea of grace and comfort; the depths of misery, and the abyss of divine mercy. For what is this life and world of ours but a troublesome and tempestuous sea? As the sea is never at rest, but is perpetually ruffled with winds and waves, so is the life of man. Sometimes we fancy ourselves safe and out of danger, when suddenly a stormy wind arises, and the floods swell, to the great danger both of body and soul. As the sea has its ebb and flow, so has the life of man. Hence we read that the Lord dries the sea, the waters of the great deep. Isa. 51:10; Jer. 31:35; Ps. 107:25. Moreover, as the freshest waters when they come into the sea grow salt, so all the pleasures, glories, honors, and riches of this mortal life, however sweet and pleasant at first, soon grow bitter and unsavory. And all that cleave to them, thereby forfeit the sweet consolations of heaven, and are drowned and overwhelmed in bitter fears and perplexing sorrows.

16. As the sea has many rocks and quicksands, on which vessels split and are lost, so in human life, many there are who split upon the rocks of covetousness, and run foul of the quicksands of worldly pleasures, and are lost to all eternity. As the sea, after some days, throws up the carcasses that have been cast into it, so the world vomits us out, after it has entertained us a little while; so that it is our highest wisdom to look out betimes for a haven of salvation in the land of the living. As the mariner sails at random without his compass, and has no certain guide but his needle, which is continually pointing to the pole, so Jesus Christ is our loadstone, continually drawing our hearts towards him and heaven, that we may not float up and down at random, or be lost in the sea of this world. As the depth of the sea is unsearchable, according to Job, "Hast thou entered into the springs of the sea? or hast thou walked in the search of the depth?" (Job 38:16); so is our life an unsearchable abyss of misery and sorrow. Whence the Psalmist says, "Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord." Ps. 130:1. And, "Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts; all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me." Ps. 42:7. So that our life is nothing but a vast sea of calamity and sorrow.

17. To this abyss of misery and sin we must oppose the abyss of grace and consolation. And the first comfort is the boundless mercy of God, which is higher than the heavens, and deeper than the sea. Of this the prophet Micah speaks, "He will have compassion on us, and cast all our sins into the depths of the sea." Micah 7:19. As the Egyptians were drowned in the Red Sea (Exod. 14:28), so must all our sins be drowned and

washed away in the blood of Christ. And though the abyss of our misery be ever so great, yet the merits of Jesus Christ are greater.

18. A second comfort is, the consideration of the many wonders that God has wrought in the water; and that the blessed Jesus assisted his disciples when they were in danger by sea. Matt. 8:26. He stretched out his hand to Peter when he was afraid of sinking. Matt. 14:31. So, at this day, he is never nearer to us, than when we are sinking in the floods of affliction; and we never so fully experience his presence and assistance, as when we are under the cross. "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee." Isa. 43:2.

19. A third consolation is contained in these words of the prophet Zechariah: "It shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea." Zech. 14:8. So also the prophet Ezekiel (Ezekiel 47:8) saw a stream of water flowing out of the temple near the altar into the sea, healing and quickening everything that was touched by it. This signifies the fountain of grace and consolation opened by the Holy Spirit, by the preaching of the Gospel, whereby the bitter waters of affliction are to be refreshed and sweetened; so that the cross shall be no longer a Dead Sea, but a water of life, and a well of salvation. According as it is said, "In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my soul." Ps. 94:19.

20. A fourth consolation against the stormy sea of this world, is contained in Psalm 65:7. "God stilleth the noise of the seas, the noise of their waves, and the tumult of the people." As if he had said, When all things threaten ruin and destruction, when wars rage, and desolation seems to be at hand; then can God easily still the waves. So did the blessed Jesus, Matt. 8:26. "The Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters." Ps. 93:4.

CHAPTER VI.

OF THE LIVING CREATURES, THE WORK OF THE SIXTH DAY.

And out of the ground the Lord formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam, to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field.—Gen. 1:24; 2:19, 20.

HERE Adam gave an illustrious proof of the divine wisdom implanted in him by God, to the honor and praise of Him that gave it. He beheld His wisdom and goodness in the variety of his creatures; he considered the distinct forms, figures, proportions, and colors of them all; he distinctly viewed, and understood the nature of the living animals by the

light of divine wisdom; and, upon a full survey of the properties of every creature, he gave them proper and significant names, expressing their several natures. From this natural knowledge of all creatures, he called her that was made out of his rib, *Woman*, because she was taken out of man; afterward, *Eve*, as being "the mother of all living." Gen. 2 : 23; 3 : 20.

2. So, even at this day, God shows to us the natures and properties of all creatures in his holy Word, that we may thereby be led to praise and magnify the wisdom and goodness of Him that made them. Thus Job says (12 : 7, 8), "Ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee; or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee; and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee." See also Chap. 39. He leads us, as it were, into every part of the brute creation, putting us in mind of the many wonders of divine power and mercy manifested in every one of them. So Jeremiah sends us "to the stork and the crane, the turtle, and the swallow, who know the appointed time of their coming." Jer. 8 : 7. Isaiah sends us "to the ox and the ass, who know their master's crib" (Isa. 1 : 3); David and Job, "to the young ravens that call upon God" (Ps. 147 : 9; Job 38 : 41); David again, "to the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear" (Ps. 58 : 4); Isaiah, "to the cockatrice' eggs and vipers" (Isa. 59 : 5); Jeremiah, "to the sea monsters, that draw out the breast, and give suck to their young ones;" adding, "the daughter of my people is become cruel like the ostriches in the wilderness." Lam. 4 : 3. So the Song of Solomon speaks of the "young hart, the dove, and the foxes" (Song of Solomon 2 : 9, 14, 15); David, "of the hart panting after the water-brooks" (Ps. 42 : 1); Solomon, "of the ant" (Prov. 6 : 6); David and Isaiah, "of the eagles." Ps. 103 : 5. "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength," like the eagles. Isa. 40 : 31. Lastly, Habakkuk and Jeremiah speak of the wolves, leopards, and lions, sent to be executioners of divine vengeance. Hab. 1 : 8; Jer. 5 : 6.

3. So also in the New Testament, the blessed Jesus speaks of the sparrows, not one of which falleth to the ground without the knowledge of our heavenly Father. Matt. 10 : 29. Thus he speaks "of the wisdom of serpents, and the harmlessness of doves" (Matt. 10 : 16); of "the hen gathering her chickens under her wings" (Matt. 23 : 37); of "the eagles' following the carcass" (Matt. 24 : 28); of "the dogs that eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table." Matt. 15 : 27. So he describes his own sheep, with their several properties. John 10 : 27, 28. Lastly, he talks of the scorpion and serpent, which no father would give to his children when they ask for an egg or a fish. Luke 11 : 11, 12.

4. Here it may be considered why the blessed Jesus himself is compared to a lamb (Isa. 53 : 7), to express his exemplary meekness and patience. Why did the blessed Spirit light upon the Son of God in the form of a dove (Matt. 3 : 16), but because the mourning of a dove (Isa. 38 : 14) resembles the mourning of the spirit in the hearts of the faithful. Hence Hezekiah says of himself: "I did mourn as a dove." Isa. 38 : 14. Why had "the four living creatures the faces of a man, an ox, a lion, and an eagle"? Ezek. 1 : 10; Rev. 4 : 7. They express to us the four mediatorial offices of Christ: his incarnation, sacrifice, resurrection, and ascension.

5. Here also we may consider the wonderful providence of God, whereby he protects, sustains, and nourishes all his creatures. Thus in Psalm 65 David celebrates the paternal mercies of God towards all creatures. Again, "O Lord, thou preservest man and beast." Ps. 36 : 6. This consideration should strengthen our faith and secure our perseverance in prayer, under all the wants and necessities of soul and body. And whereas David mentions the word *flesh*, "to thee shall all flesh come" (Ps. 65 : 2); this seems to have a particular regard to our bodily wants and sufferings (as we are flesh and blood), such as hunger, cold, nakedness, etc.; and should, at the same time, put us in mind of our own vileness and corruption, which is frequently in Scripture expressed by the word *flesh*. Isa. 40 : 6. The prophet gives us further comfort, by adding, that there is no man so vile and contemptible as to be despised or forgotten before God. This is expressed to us in these words: "Thou who art the confidence of all the ends of the earth, and of them that are afar off upon the sea." Ps. 65 : 5. As if he had said: So great is the love of God to mankind, that wheresoever they are, whether by land or sea, he still takes care to protect and defend them. And whereas he adds, "Thou makest the outgoings of the morning and evening to rejoice" (ver. 8); his meaning is, that, as God feeds and nourishes all creatures, so he comforts and refreshes them, too, according to the words of St. Paul, "filling our hearts with food and gladness." Acts 14 : 17. For it is no small blessing to feed upon his creatures with a cheerful mind, to begin the labors of the day with devout prayers and praises, and to conclude them with thanksgiving. Lastly, he assigns the cause, in these words: "The river of God is full of water" (ver. 9); that is, the fountain of divine bounty, mercy, and goodness, overflows to all his creatures, upon which our being and comforts entirely depend.

6. To this also may be referred that passage of the Psalmist, "All wait upon thee, that thou mayest give them their meat in due season." Ps. 104 : 27. And not only so, but he represents also the brute creatures as sensible of this dependence upon God, "The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their meat from God" (Ps. 104 : 21); intimating thereby, that God, the Preserver of nature, is moved to pity and to assist the distresses and sufferings of every creature; and that the wants of every part of his creation, whether animate or inanimate, are a sort of silent prayer to the great author and preserver of their being. And this is called by St. Paul, "the earnest expectation of the creature." Rom. 8 : 19. Here let us consider likewise what an infinite variety of creatures there are contained in the air, earth, and sea, and that God has mercifully provided for the comfortable subsistence of every one, in a way suitable to their proper natures. And if God takes such care of the meanest of his creatures, it would be wrong to imagine, that man, created in *his own image*, should be neglected or forgotten by him.

7. And since there are more creatures in the earth, air, and sea, than there are men in the whole world; and the providence of God is extended to the meanest and smallest of his creatures, how is it possible that man should be forgotten,—*man*, that lives, moves, and has his being in him; "for in him we live, and move, and have our being," saith St. Paul (Acts 17 :

28),—*man*, that is sustained by his power: for "he upholdeth all things by the word of his power" (Heb. 1: 3)—*man*, whom he has made with his own hand; according to Isaiah 64: 8. "O Lord, thou art our Father; we are the clay, and thou art the potter, and we all are the work of thy hand;"—*man*, whom he has redeemed by the blood of his only begotten Son, and sealed with his Holy Spirit? In a word, God can no more forget man, than he can forget Himself. So that we have all the reason in the world to depend upon him, that he will give us meat in due season.

8. The Psalmist goes on: "That thou givest them, they gather: thou openest thy hand, they are filled with good." Ps. 104: 28. In these words is expressed that power, whereby the creatures are preserved. And this consists in a certain natural sagacity or instinct implanted in them by God, by which every one of them is prompted to look out, and procure such things as are proper for the support of life and being. And the pleasure which they receive in this exercise, is a sort of gratitude and acknowledgment to God whom they seem to look upon and rejoice in, as their Maker, Preserver, and Benefactor.

9. Now if God takes so much care for the comfortable subsistence of all his creatures, we cannot think that he made man for perpetual anguish and sorrow, but must conclude that he is pleased to see us innocently cheerful in the fear of God. So, in Psalm 90: 15, we are directed to pray, that God would make us glad according to the days wherein he afflicted us; and the years in which we saw evil. He promises his servants that they shall eat, drink, and rejoice (Isai. 65: 13); and from the words of David, it plainly appears that he intends to feed his servants, not sparingly, but plentifully and bountifully; to which end, he maketh his paths drop fatness. Ps. 65: 11. Experience itself also teaches us, that all creatures are so plentifully fed by God, that, at proper seasons, the birds of the air, the wild beasts of the forest, the cattle in the fields, and the fish of the sea, offer themselves, fattened and prepared, for the use and nourishment of man; and in that sense also "his paths drop fatness." So wonderful is the providence, so transcendent is the wisdom, so great is the concern of God, to provide for all the necessities of his children.

10. And then the Psalmist adds, "Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled; thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust. Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created; and thou renewest the face of the earth." Ps. 104: 29, 30. His meaning is, that the life of all creatures is nothing else but the breath of God. This quickening virtue and power of God, is that word by which all things were made. "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth." Ps. 33: 6. And this word was not an empty sound, but became the life of all creatures, resting upon them as a principle of life and power; as St. Paul tells us, "the Lord upholdeth all things by the word of his power." Heb. 1: 3. So that the life and being of all things as much depend on God, as the shadow of a tree does upon the substance.

11. Thus when God withdraws this word of life, or vital power, from the creatures, they immediately sink into their primitive nothingness. The whole world is full of God, "of whom, and through whom, and to whom are all

things." Rom. 11 : 36. He is said to be "above all, and through all, and in us all" (Eph. 4 : 6): so that "the Lord is the strength of our life." Ps. 27 : 1; Deut. 30 : 20. For as men of sorrowful and distressed spirits perceive a true and vital power in the word of God; so there is in all creatures a sort of natural and vital power, which is nothing else but the *Word* of Creation. By virtue of this Word also, all the creatures are blessed and do multiply. By this, the face of the earth is every year renewed by a succession of plants, fruits, and living creatures, as if there were a new world every year. "While the earth remaineth," saith God to Noah, "seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease." Gen. 8 : 22. By the same blessing, the world is preserved to this day.

12. This wonderful and universal Providence of God, consists chiefly in three things. First, in his *knowledge*. "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world." Acts 15 : 18. By this infinite and incomprehensible wisdom, he knows, sees, and hears all things; therefore he is called in Scripture, "the God that liveth and seeth." Gen. 16 : 14 (margin). No creature is hidden from him, but all things are naked and open in his sight. Heb. 4 : 13. And he is called "the Living," not only because he himself liveth forever, but also because he is the life of all things.

13. The second head of divine Providence, is the fatherly *goodness* of God (Matt. 6 : 26), by which He taketh care of all things: "He maketh his sun to rise on the evil, and on the good." Matt. 5 : 45. So, then, if his mercy be not only extended to the least, but even to the undeserving parts of his creation; how ungrateful are we, if we entertain any suspicions of so indulgent a Father. And if nothing be done upon earth but by his appointment and direction, we may hence learn to submit with patience to everything that befalls us, without repining or murmuring against God; firmly believing that he careth for us, and by his unsearchable wisdom ordereth all things for our good and his own glory. On the other hand, if he take from us our riches, honors, health, and other worldly blessings, we must resign them with cheerfulness, and say with Job, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away." Job 1 : 21. That good man gave thanks to God for his adversity, as well as for his prosperity; and the former very often proves the greater blessing of the two.

14. The third head of God's universal providence over all his creatures is, his *omnipotence*. By this he is always present to his creatures, governing and preserving them; by this he governs the hearts of all men, and turneth them which way he pleases. Ps. 33 : 15. Whence it follows, that in all our thoughts, words, and actions, we ought to have a lively and devout sense of the divine omnipresence, and dread to do anything that is hateful in his sight. For as is the clay in the hand of the potter, so are men in the hand of God, even as we read in Jeremiah, "Arise and go down to the potter's house : and I went down, and behold, he wrought a work on the wheels. And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter; so he made it again another vessel, etc." Jer. 18 : 2. The prophet intimates thereby that God, who afflicteth and breaketh us to pieces, can also heal and restore us again.

15. Moreover, as we are assured that God is everywhere present, and preserves and governs everything, it follows that he is so careful of his own servants, that not a hair of their heads can fall to the ground (Matt. 10:30; Luke 21:18; Acts 27:34) without his permission; and that he preserveth and keepeth us in the midst of our enemies, as we have it frequently expressed in the Psalms. Ps. 23:4; 27:1; 121:5. So when we are in distress, and there are no apparent hopes of relief, we should support ourselves with this consideration: that the Lord himself, "great in counsel, and mighty in work" (Jer. 32:19), who laid our cross upon us, can easily lighten it, or strengthen us to bear it. Let us "commit our way unto the Lord" (Ps. 37:5), like Abraham, who was ready to offer up his only son, without questioning how God could perform his promise to him, but cast all his care upon God. Gen. 22:8; Rom. 4:18; Heb. 11:19.

16. And then, the consideration of God's providence raises in us faith, hope, and patience, of which we have examples in Job, David, and Christ himself. The blessed Jesus, knowing that he was appointed by God to die, preserved his meekness and patience all the days of his life, yea, even in the very agonies of death. Phil. 2:8. Thus David patiently endured banishment for years, attended with injuries, reproaches, poverty, and contempt; knowing assuredly that it was God that laid it upon him. This makes him cry out, "Thou, O Lord, art a shield for me; my glory, and the lifter up of mine head." Ps. 3:3. To which may be referred that passage, "The Lord killeth, and maketh alive; he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up. The Lord maketh poor, and maketh rich; he bringeth low, and lifteth up." 1 Sam. 2:6, 7.

17. But before we conclude this subject, we must say something particularly of man, the crown and masterpiece of the creation, of his excellence and prerogatives, which must be very great, forasmuch as God himself has declared, that "his delights are with the sons of men." Prov. 8:31. For if all things were created for the use of man, and he is the end of this visible creation, it follows that he is the perfection of it. Reason itself convinces us, that whatsoever is the end and perfection of all things, must be more excellent than all others. So, then, all the beauty of fountains, fields, flowers, trees, fruits, and woods, yea, and all the glittering brightness of heaven, the sun, moon, and stars, are not to be compared with the native and original excellence of man, for whose sake and benefit they were all created. For as Solomon in all his glory was not to be compared with the flowers of the field (Matt. 6:29); so the excellence of man, especially as to his soul, far transcends not only the external glory of Solomon, but all the beauties of this lower world, yea, and of the sun itself.

18. And as for the soul, we may judge of its excellency and beauty by the form and comeliness of the body which God has prepared for its reception and residence. He provided a comely mansion for so excellent a guest. So, if we should see the spotless beauty of the original human body, we should easily judge of the beauty of its divine inhabitant. Even now, in this corrupt and depraved state of nature, we see what attractive charms there are in beauty. Moreover, we may judge yet farther of the beauty of human nature, by the glories

of the place in which God at first placed man; which was *Paradise* itself, a garden full of joy and celestial pleasures, infinitely exceeding all the glory and beauty of the present world. For if the place were so glorious, what must the owner of it be, for whose sake it was created?

19. Another great argument of the dignity of human nature is, that the angels themselves are appointed to minister unto us (Heb. 1 : 14); and that we were created, as it were, by a particular decree of the ever-blessed Trinity. "Let us make man," saith God, "in our image, after our likeness." Gen. 1 : 26. So that how great soever our dignity may be, by that singular decree and counsel by which we were made, yet that which arises from the image of God, in which we were created, is much greater. Therefore, when he created the sun, moon, and all the host of heaven, he but spake the word, and they were made. But when he was about to make man, the greatest and noblest of all his works, he ushers it in with a kind of solemnity, saying, "Let us make man." How wonderful is that counsel! How solemn is that decree! How transcendent is the dignity of human nature!

20. For though the sun, moon, and stars, and all the lower world, were made with wonderful wisdom and power; yet that deliberation does not seem to have been used there as in the creation of *man;* forasmuch as in him, the glory and majesty of God were more particularly and gloriously to be manifested. All the other creatures bear upon them certain marks and signatures of divine goodness and power, but man is the very image and likeness of God. For it is not said, Let us make man in the image of the sun, or of the moon, or of the angels; but "in our likeness," that our own image may be clearly represented in him.

21. Consider, therefore, the beauty and dignity of thy soul, which is created in the image and likeness of God, so that the glories of the divine majesty are, in a certain proportion, transferred to thee. How much reason have we then to avoid all impurity and uncleanness, that we defile not the beauty of the divine image. For if we are thereby exalted to the highest glory and honor that our nature is capable of, how unworthy and ungrateful would it be, to pollute it by any uncleanness, and so forfeit that glory which God has bestowed on us.

22. How highly is a picture or statue prized, that is well executed by an eminent hand! Could such a picture or statue be endued with understanding, how would it esteem its maker, and take all opportunities of showing its own gratitude, and its maker's glory! How senseless then, how ungrateful is man, to forget the hand that formed him! to despise that excellent beauty with which his Maker endued him! to pollute it with all kinds of impurity! Plato, himself, a pagan, has told us, that "the beauty of the soul consists in virtue and piety." But did we only consider the union of our souls with God and Christ, the righteousness of Christ wherewith our souls are clothed, as with a garment of glory and immortality (Isa. 61 : 10), we should more easily understand what the true and inward beauty of our souls is, which depends entirely upon that of Jesus Christ. And if it be so, who can question but that the soul is most exquisitely beautiful, since it derives its beauty from Him who is beauty itself?

23. To this belongs that passage of

the prophet Ezekiel, "Thy renown went forth among the heathen for thy beauty; for it was perfect through my comeliness which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord God." Ezek. 16 : 14. If children partake of the beauty of their parents according to the flesh; it is reasonable to believe, that our souls, by spiritual regeneration, receive a spiritual beauty from God. Moreover, it cannot be doubted that they are the most beautiful of all creatures, since the Son of God himself does not disdain to betroth himself unto them, and to adorn them with his own light and beauty. Upon this account, the faithful soul is called, "a king's daughter, all glorious within, whose clothing is of wrought gold." Ps. 45 : 15. If a plebeian woman be ennobled by marriage with a husband of quality, can we doubt but that the faithful soul, by being married to the most noble and beautiful spouse, shall also partake, in a high degree, of His beauty and glory. Upon this Irenæus has a fine thought. He says, that "the glory of man is God, but the receptacle of all the operations of divine wisdom and goodness, is man."

24. Lastly, as it is beyond all controversy, that the most high God particularly delights to dwell in the soul of man; that he has sanctified it to be the temple of the Holy Ghost, the habitation of the Father, and the bride-chamber of the most beautiful spouse, the Lord Jesus Christ, we may therefore conclude that the soul is the most beautiful of all creatures. And as Ezekiel tells us that "our soul is perfected by the comeliness of God" (Ezek. 16 : 14); how great must that beauty, how rich must that attire, how transcendent must those ornaments be, which so great and noble a spouse can bestow upon the bride which he has prepared for himself? O how wonderful is this grace! How incredible is the beauty which God bestows upon human souls! Could it but be seen by mortal eyes, it must charm the most stupid beholder. And this beauty increases every day by our prayers, and devout approaches to God. So that "we are changed from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord." 2 Cor. 3 : 18. For if the face of Moses, after conversing a few days with God, shone with the brightness of divine glory (Exod. 34 : 35); how much more shall our souls, by the same conversation, be enlightened and beautified with higher degrees of light and glory?—Of this subject we shall speak more fully in Part II, of this Fourth Book, which refers to man in particular.

PART II.

TREATING SPECIALLY OF MAN.

CHAPTER I.

GOD, AN INFINITE AND ETERNAL BEING.

Ah, Lord God! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee.—The Great, the Mighty God, the Lord of hosts, is his name; great in counsel, and mighty in work.—Jer. 32 : 17–19.

GOD is the origin of the life and being of all creatures: whence it follows, that he was before all creatures, both an eternal Being, and eternal Life itself; otherwise he could not have given life and being to his creatures. But the infinity of God yet more plainly appears from the mind and thoughts of man. For as the mind of man can in a moment run through the whole circle of heaven, and comprehend in imagination all the creatures of the universe; it follows, that God who made him, comprehends all these things in a more perfect manner, and by consequence must be infinite.

2. All the attributes of God are essential to him. As therefore he is infinite, so are his essence and life also infinite. For essence and life are inseparable from him. Moreover, as he has endued the soul of man with wisdom and understanding, it follows that the understanding and wisdom of God must be infinite. For whatsoever is in God, is essentially and eternally in him. And as the unity of the divine nature is so perfect that his wisdom cannot be separated from his essence and life, it follows that both are alike infinite and eternal.

3. But if the wisdom of God be eternal and infinite, it will follow that He knoweth all things from eternity. Moreover, as his essence is unchangeable, equally filling all places; so his understanding does not proceed by way of rational connection, or discursive operation from one idea to another. He knoweth and understandeth all things in an instant, and to him there is nothing past or to come, but the whole circle of eternity is present to him. For as God stands in need of no creature to add anything to the perfection of his being, so neither does he need any creature with respect to his understanding. And as he is God, independently of all creatures; so he penetrates and comprehends all things in himself. So that the sands of the sea, and the drops of the rain, and eternity, are alike known to him.

And not so much as a bird of the air, or a hair of our heads, can fall to the ground without him. Matt. 10 : 29, 30. He knoweth the days of the world, every hour and moment of time, with its several periods and revolutions; nor is anything under the heavens hidden from him. For as by his infinite power he created all things, so by his infinite wisdom he understands and comprehends all things; even the most secret thoughts of man. Ps. 139 : 2, &c.

4. Moreover, as his essence, life, and wisdom, so also his power is infinite, and all are equally incapable of any addition or diminution. Lastly, forasmuch as no creature can oppose or set bounds to his power, therefore, he is Almighty. All which must necessarily be, forasmuch as his essence, life, wisdom, and power, are inseparable.

CHAPTER II.

GOD, THE SUPREME GOOD.

For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things.—ROM. 11 : 36.

AS He must be the chief and only good, in whom all good things are contained; it follows that glory and praise belong to God alone, because from him, and by him, and for him, are all things.

2. All the goodness that is found scattered up and down among the creatures, is in a most perfect and excellent manner and degree contained in him. So that whosoever turns himself to the creatures, and cleaves unto them, will always find himself poor, needy, and distressed: whilst he that turneth unto God with his whole heart, pursues the chief and most perfect good, and shall be blessed in the enjoyment of it: ever rich, ever at ease, ever blessed in the fruition of his God. By this it appears that perfect happiness is not to be found in the enjoyment of the creatures, and that they who fix their hearts and desires on the world, can expect nothing but anguish, disquiet, and disappointments, both in life and in death; for they have not that chief good, which alone can satisfy and make happy the soul of man.

CHAPTER III.

MAN, THE MOST NOBLE OF ALL CREATURES, AND MADE FOR THE SERVICE OF GOD.

Know ye that the Lord he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.—Ps. 100 : 3.

ALL the creatures, in their several kinds and orders, were created by God for the use and benefit of man. Thus we see corn and pasture produced, these feeding the living creatures, and all serving for food to mankind. One assists another, the higher wheel setting the lower in motion, and all in a wonderful harmony concurring to one great end, which is the use and benefit of man.

2. Now, if all this be for his sake, he is certainly more noble than they all; and hence he should learn what dependence he has upon God, and what duty and service he owes to Him who has appointed all the creatures, in their order, to minister to his necessities.

3. And, as all the creatures seem to aim at no other end than the use and service of man, and seem to rest and be satisfied in obtaining that end; so ought man likewise to show the same diligence and faithfulness in the service of God, that the creatures show to him. All his works and labors ought to be directed to this one end, namely, to accomplish the will of God, and do nothing but that which is well-pleasing in his sight. For as all things are incessantly employed in serving man, the noblest of all creatures, so there is all the reason in the world that he should be as constant and assiduous in the service of God, who is perfection itself, and to whom alone he is indebted for that superiority which he has over the rest of the creatures.

CHAPTER IV.

GOD MADE MAN IN HIS OWN IMAGE, IN ORDER THAT HE MIGHT DELIGHT IN HIM.

My delights were with the sons of men.—Prov. 8 : 31.—*The Lord shall rejoice in his works.*—Ps. 104 : 31.

EVERY artist has a love for the works of his own hands, and that induces him to take so much pains about them. "God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good." Gen. 1:31. But if he took so much delight in the general survey of his works, how much greater pleasure must he take in man, whom he created after his own image.

2. For the more anything resembles ourselves, the more tenderly do we

love it. A father has a stronger affection for his son, who partakes of his own nature, than for a house which he himself has builded, though ever so exact and regular in itself.

3. Moreover, as God takes pleasure in a creature made to resemble himself, therefore, it was necessary, that after the other creatures were formed, he should create man in his own image, in whom he might rest and delight himself. And as similitude is the foundation of friendship and society, and everything naturally associates with its like, it follows that God, in making man after his own image, intended to delight and rejoice Himself in him; so that man ought likewise to cleave unto his God, and to delight and take pleasure in conversing with Him.

4. Further, as God is the most perfect love, he could not but desire to communicate himself, and all his blessings, to some other being. That could not be done, however, without making some being like himself; and as there was no such being then in nature, capable or worthy of such divine communications, therefore he created man in his own image, which consists chiefly in perfect love.

5. And, lastly, as there is naturally a reciprocal love betwixt the giver and the receiver of any benefit; hence it follows, that it is the duty of man to worship with the highest affection and most ardent love, his heavenly Benefactor, who so affectionately desires to communicate himself, and all the riches of his goodness, to his unworthy creatures.

CHAPTER V.

THAT GOD BY HIS LOVE BESTOWS HIMSELF UPON US.

God is love.—1 JOHN 4:16.

AS man devotes himself entirely unto God by love, so God bestows himself entirely upon man also by love. And as that love of his is in the highest degree of perfection, he cannot but give us Himself: for the highest instance of love is to bestow one's self upon the person we love. And as a consequence of this perfect love, He bestowed himself upon us in his only begotten Son.

2. This is the true spring of the incarnation, passion, and death of the Son of God. Thus our blessed Saviour pronounces these words of comfort, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son" (John 3:16); that is, God loved the world with an entire and perfect love, and therefore gave us his Son. But as the eternal love of God is the fountain of eternal life to the world; and that eternal love is manifested by Christ Jesus, in and by whom we have everlasting life, therefore, our Lord further adds: "that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

CHAPTER VI.

SHOWING HOW MUCH MAN IS INDEBTED TO GOD FOR HIS EVERLASTING LOVE.

We love him, because he first loved us.—1 John 4 : 19.

IN every benefit or gift there are three things to be considered: the giver, the receiver, and the gift itself. As, then, there is a natural obligation upon the receiver to the giver, it is manifest, that since man has received all that he has from God, so he owes all to him, and is under the strictest obligations of love and obedience to his great benefactor.

2. And as man consists of body and soul, so God has abundantly provided for the comfort and happiness of both.

3. As for his body, it is sustained and refreshed by the various productions of nature, so that the whole creation seems to call upon him, and put him in mind of his Creator: "Consider," it saith, "O man, the benefits which thy Maker has bestowed upon thee, and what returns of gratitude and service thou owest him for the same. I (saith the heaven), give thee daylight to work in, and send darkness in which thou mayest sleep and take thy rest. I give thee the pleasant spring, the warm summer, the fruitful autumn, and the cold winter, in their proper seasons. I (saith the air), supply thee with breath, and every kind of birds. By me (saith the water), art thou washed, and thy thirst is quenched; by me thou art supplied with all kinds of fish. I bear thee and sustain thee (saith the earth), and satisfy thee with bread, wine, and flesh; by all which thou mayest know how much thou art beloved by Him who made thee, and me for thy use; all of whose favors are as so many bonds and obligations upon thee."

CHAPTER VII.

OF THE THINGS THAT INSTRUCT AND COMFORT THE SOUL.

Ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee: or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee.—Job 12 : 7, 8.

LET us now see what provision God has made for the comfort and instruction of the *soul* of man. Here we shall find every creature in one way or another, subservient to this end. And, first, I shall speak of the pleasure which man receives from the creatures.

2. Man alone has the privilege of really enjoying what he possesses. Other creatures, being void of understanding, have no relish of those bless-

ings from which man receives very great comfort; gold, silver, and precious stones, have no intelligence. But man, being endowed with an understanding mind, reflects with gratitude and pleasure upon the goodness of God, who has provided so many beautiful creatures for his use and benefit. O the wonderful goodness of God, who has made all the excellencies of the creatures subservient to the happiness of man; so that they are the channels of conveying that happiness to us, which they themselves are not capable of enjoying! Thus the sweetness and goodness of the water, the fragrance and beauty of flowers, the light and glory of the sun, moon, and all the host of heaven, yield no pleasure to themselves, but all unite to promote the happiness of man. Nay, without them, man would have no enjoyment at all in this world; nor could he have any notion of the dignity and pre-eminence of his nature above that of other creatures, but by comparing his condition with theirs. This shows him the transcendent goodness of God, manifested to him above all the rest of the creation; this teaches him to be thankful for his beautiful form and stature, his erect countenance, but above all, for his rational soul, created after the image of God. From all which it appears, that the knowledge of a man's self is his highest wisdom, and the want of it, the most deplorable folly.

3. Moreover, the creatures were made, not only for the delight of man, but also to be his monitors and instructors. For from them we may learn, that our chief good consists not in worldly and outward enjoyments; such as eating, drinking, and the gratifying the other bodily appetites, all which are common to the beasts as well as to us; and this is a convincing argument, that man, being of a more noble frame and nature than they, ought to look for other meat and drink, and other pleasures suitable to the higher nobility of his nature, which the inferior creatures cannot share with him. I need not here mention, that the greatest part of human wisdom arises from the contemplation of the creatures. Thus our music came from the sound of metals; our skill in medicine, from other creatures; and our astronomy, from the stars; which still farther illustrates my first observation, that the whole world was created for the sake of man, for which he owes never-ending thanks to his munificent Creator.

CHAPTER VIII.

OF THE OBLIGATIONS UNDER WHICH MEN LIE TO GOD.

O Lord, how great are thy works! and thy thoughts are very deep. A brutish man knoweth not; neither doth a fool understand this.—Ps. 92: 5, 6.

THE obligations which man lies under to God, are as many and as great, as are the favors which he has received from him, or the excellencies which he has bestowed upon all the creatures. For as every crea-

ture was made for his use and benefit, so ought his gratitude to rise in proportion for them all. If a king should bestow great estates and honors upon a company of children in the same family, and but one of the number had age and sense enough to know the greatness of the favor and honor done to them, he alone is certainly obliged to thank him in the name of all the rest, and would be guilty of ingratitude if he did not. So in this world, the rest of the creatures are like children, that know not the worth and value of God's blessings, as man does; he is, therefore, alone obliged to adore and praise him in the name and stead of all the rest, and is highly ungrateful if he does not.

CHAPTER IX.

MAN EVEN MORE INDEBTED TO GOD FOR INWARD, THAN FOR OUTWARD BLESSINGS.

And the fear of you shall be upon every beast of the earth.—Gen. 9 : 2.

As man knows himself to be the most excellent of all creatures, so ought he to be more thankful to God for the perfections of his own being and nature, than for those of all the rest of the world. For as all things else were made for his sake, he must of necessity be more perfect and excellent than they. The sun, the moon, and all the host of heaven, those glorious bodies, all wait upon man, and do him service. This they do, not on account of his body, which, considered in this corrupt state, is less excellent than theirs; but on account of his soul, as to which he is in every respect superior to them. For the very notion of servitude implies a superiority in the person to whom the service is paid: so that it would be unnatural for those glorious bodies to do that service to man, if he had not an immortal soul, and by consequence, a more excellent nature than they.

2. And on account of the immortality of the soul, it is an unworthy thing for a man to fix it upon anything that is mortal and perishing; because it is incapable of uniting with anything but what is immortal, and particularly with God himself. The body, indeed, is connected with corporeal objects, and is capable of terrestrial enjoyments; but the soul should be united solely with God; so that, as a king, he might be enthroned and bear rule in her; and in this consists the excellency of man above all other creatures, that his soul is the throne, the image, and habitation of God. Greater honor than this no creature is capable of receiving; therefore man is the most excellent of all, and is infinitely indebted to the Author and Giver of such inestimable benefits.

CHAPTER X.

OF THE WISDOM WHICH GOD HAS SHOWN IN THE FORMATION OF MAN.

O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all.—Ps. 104: 24.

THERE are three orders in the natural body. The first is to the body the same that the husbandmen and laborers are to the state; being employed in raising the appetite, digesting and concocting the food, separating the juices, and in all the other inferior offices of the animal economy. This lower faculty works night and day, for the security and preservation of the others. For such is the constitution of human bodies, that if the lower faculties be out of order, or cease to operate, the superior, which depend upon them, cannot subsist.

2. The next faculty is the sensitive, diversified by the five perceptions of seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, and feeling, which are all more or less noble, the one than the other. The sight is more noble than the hearing, because objects are seen at a much greater distance than they are heard. The hearing is more noble than the taste, as being capable of exerting itself at a greater distance. And for the same reason, the taste and smelling are more noble than the feeling, which is the weakest and lowest of all.

3. The third order, which is the highest and most noble of all, answers to the government in the state, and is divided into the reason, the will, and the memory. These govern and command the faculties, having each a function distinct from the rest. These are not corporeal, as the others, but strictly mental faculties; and are, therefore, more noble and excellent. Besides which, they are also endued with that perfect liberty, that they cannot be compelled to anything. For who can force the will to desire that for which it has no mind; or to hate that which it loves? The will is altogether free, and cannot be forced. These are clothed with virtues proper to each of them; as the will with righteousness; the understanding with wisdom; the memory with eloquence, etc. This is the economy settled by God in human nature.

CHAPTER XI.

OF THE OBLIGATIONS MAN LIES UNDER TOWARDS GOD.

What hast thou that thou didst not receive?—1 Cor. 4: 7.

THERE are two very general and comprehensive favors, for which man is exceedingly obliged to God; the one visible and corporeal, which is this world; the other spiritual and invisible, which is the love of God.

2. And though this latter is indeed the first, as being the foundation of

all his other blessings, which are no more than infinite rivulets flowing from this universal fountain of divine love; yet, because it is invisible, the folly of man hardly considers it as any mercy at all. So that man, being delighted only with visible things, does not regard or consider that the love which is concealed under them, is greater and better than the things themselves. In a word, as smoke is a sign of fire, so are the blessings of God a certain proof of his love towards us.

3. Since, then, the gifts and blessings of God are, as it were, certain steps by which to mount up to God himself, it follows, that his love is as great as his gifts are; and as he made the whole world for the sake of man, and formed all creatures for his use, and regards them only as they serve and minister to his beloved creature, man; as he has exalted and loved him above all creatures, and as this love of God is the most sincere, pure, safe, and in a word, the highest good, which prompted him to form and love man, not for any advantage which He was to reap from him, but out of the overflowings of his free grace and boundless love; from all these considerations, I say, it is plain that man is more indebted to God for this love, than for all the particular gifts and favors that God can bestow, and man receive.

4. There are two things to be considered in every favor: the love that precedes and influences the giver, and the gift itself, which is the consequence of that love. The former is not only more noble and valuable than the latter, but is in all respects equal to the person that shows it. Hence, it follows, that the love of God is as infinitely good and great as God himself. This confirms the position first laid down, that man is more obliged to God for his love, than for any or all of his particular graces and favors. And as man cannot subsist a moment without the favor and mercy of God (for on Him his breath and life entirely depend), it is plain that his obligations to God are greater than those of all the creatures besides.

CHAPTER XII.

OF ANSWERING THE OBLIGATIONS WHICH MAN LIES UNDER TO GOD.

I will love thee, O Lord, my strength.—Ps. 18 : 1.

AS God has freely and graciously bestowed all his gifts and blessings on man, he thereby obliges him to make some satisfaction and return for all these mercies. Now man can offer and dedicate nothing unto God, but what is entirely in his own power; so that all his outward goods and riches, are not a proper offering for God.

2. But as God has bestowed on him his greatest blessing, which is his love, so he expects to be requited with love again. And as the love of God to

man is in the highest degree of perfection, so the love that he requires from us ought to be perfect, "with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind, and with all our strength." Mark 12 : 30. And how just this return is, both nature and reason may convince us. For nothing is more natural and reasonable than to love them that love us, and to proportion our love to theirs; whosoever does not this, is ungrateful and unworthy of that love which he refuses to requite. And when God does not meet with this reciprocal love from man, as he very seldom does, he has then just reason to complain of injustice and ingratitude; for he requires nothing from man but love, in return for all that infinite love and mercy which he has shown to him.

3. Moreover, such is the nature of love, so sweet, so pure, so free, and so acceptable is it, that neither fear, nor honor, nor any other thing, is good or desirable, but as it is sweetened with love. No man ever was so great, as to despise the love of his inferiors; but the greater a man is, the more does he court the love and esteem of those below him. Yea, so true is this, that God himself, the most mighty and excellent of all beings, is so far from despising the love of mankind, that he earnestly courts and desires it. This then being certain, that love is the greatest treasure any man has, he is obliged to offer it to God, who has bestowed the fulness of his love upon man.

4. By what I have here advanced I would not be understood to mean that this perfect love, since the fall, is wholly in our own power, or that by it we can make a perfct return to God for all his benefits. My only design is to show that we are convinced in our own consciences, not only from the Word of God, but also from the light of nature, that we ought to love God as he has loved us.

CHAPTER XIII.

SHOWING THAT GOD'S LOVE APPEARS IN ALL HIS WORKS, EVEN IN HIS CHASTISEMENTS.

He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.—Ps. 103 : 10.

AS love is the root and principle of all the divine acts and operations, it follows that even afflictions, which are the work of God, proceed from love, and ought to be received by man as instances of God's favor. For love is the root of all the operations of God.

2. Hence no man ought to murmur against God when He corrects him, or repine at His chastisements, or quarrel with His judgments. Our sufferings are not chargeable upon God, but upon ourselves. It would become us much better to bear his corrections without remitting our love towards him; even as he punishes us, and yet tenderly loves us still. This would be a true instance and proof of the sincerity of our love to God.

3. And though there is no proportion between the love of God towards man, and the love which the most perfect Christian bears to God, the one being infinite and the other finite; yet is it our duty continually to aim at the highest degrees attainable by us. We should endeavor that our love may be holy, pure, sincere, and persevering, even in the midst of sufferings and afflictions; as the love of God towards us is ardent, pure, unchangeable, and everlasting, even whilst he punishes and afflicts us for our sins. If we do not this, we are the most ungrateful of all his creatures; every one of which, in its order and capacity, answers the transcendent love of God with a pure love and obedience.

CHAPTER XIV.

SHOWING HOW, AND ON WHAT ACCOUNT, MAN IS OBLIGED TO LOVE GOD.

If a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned.—Cant. 8 : 7.

HITHERTO we have distinctly considered the obligations that man lies under to God; which is a doctrine founded upon that natural relation that is between the giver and the receiver; and this is, as it were, a perpetual light of nature, to direct us to the several branches of our duty to God. For as God has bestowed freely upon man everything that he possesses (whence the obligation arises), it plainly follows that man is obliged to offer up and restore unto God all that he has received from him. On the other hand, if God had given nothing, and man received nothing, there would have then been no obligation, nor any rule or measure of duty.

2. But as the love of God is the first and chief benefit which he has bestowed on man; so it is but just and reasonable that he who has so loved us should be loved by us again. Man, then, has nothing from himself, nor from others originally, but all things from God; and by consequence, is obliged solely to God. And this obligation cannot otherwise be discharged than by loving him entirely with all our hearts and with all our strength.

3. Lastly, as man continually depends upon God for his life and being; as he continually enjoys His favors and blessings, and, by His command and order, the service and assistance of the creatures; nothing less can be expected from so dependent a being, than love to Him who has so generously and bountifully blessed him.

CHAPTER XV.

SHOWING THAT ALL THE CREATURES CONTINUALLY REMIND US OF THE LOVE WHICH WE OWE TO GOD.

Doth not wisdom cry? and understanding put forth her voice?—PROV. 8:1.

AS God has loved man above all the creatures, or, to speak more properly, has loved him only, having created them all for his sake; so this perpetual love of God calls upon us, and exhorts us to love him with all our hearts; yea, all the creatures of the universe, whilst by God's command they serve us, and minister to our necessities, do, as it were, with united voices call aloud, and put us in mind of the natural obligations we are under to magnify and adore, to serve and love so gracious a Benefactor, and that freely and willingly; even as they, by God's command, freely and cheerfully assist and minister to us.

2. And as their love and service to us are not false and hypocritical, but sincere and faithful; so ought ours to be to our Creator. As they employ their whole strength night and day to serve us; so ought we night and day to be diligent and earnest in the service of God. As all the creatures, in their order, serve and minister to man alone; so ought all the powers of our souls and bodies to be employed solely in the service of God. And as the greatest natural pleasure which man has in this world, arises from the use and enjoyment of the creatures; so nothing is more acceptable to God than the sincere services of a devout soul; nothing delights him more than love, arising from a lively faith in Christ, operating in a free and willing spirit. From what has been said, it is plain that the creatures exhort and instruct mankind to love God: 1. With all their strength; 2. Freely and willingly; 3. Heartily and sincerely; 4. Solely and entirely.

CHAPTER XVI.

A GENERAL RULE, TEACHING US HOW TO ANSWER OUR OBLIGATIONS TO GOD.

Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits.—CANT. 4:16.

AS the creatures are appointed by God to obey man; so man is obliged to love God, and in this the creatures are our monitors. Thus the trees furnish us with ripe, sweet, perfect, and pleasant fruits; which, if they were unripe, sour, or rotten, nobody would taste or care for. So it is not sufficient for man to offer his service, his love, fear, and honor unto God, unless they be genuine and perfect in their kind, being made accept-

able unto God through Christ and in Christ, by the Holy Ghost, who produces in us all true and perfect fruits. This then is the great end for which we must labor, by faith and prayer, that we may bring forth fruits acceptable to God: like the trees which spend the whole twelve months of the year in laboring to produce fruits wholesome and pleasant to the eater; for God will no more accept our unripe, sour, or bitter works, than we ourselves would relish sour and unripe fruits.

2. Moreover, as the trees serve us, and naturally provide for our pleasure and benefit; so is it our duty to serve God "out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned" (1 Tim. 1:5), without hypocrisy and sinister designs, that both we and our works may be acceptable in his sight. In a word, that universal rule which holds in nature, must necessarily be transferred to our love and duty to God, namely, that a man ought never to cease from laboring, till he has brought forth fruits acceptable to God: on the other hand, that all superstition, will-worship, and hypocrisy, are as hateful and abominable in the sight of God, as unripe or rotten fruits are to us.

CHAPTER XVII.

SHOWING THAT THE CHRISTIAN WHO LOVES NOT GOD IS WITHOUT EXCUSE.

This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.—1 John 5:3.

AS God has implanted in every man a faculty of willing or desiring, which we call the will, which is also the seat of love, both which mutually depend on each other; and as man knows that the chief Good is to be loved by him, and that God is that chief Good; hence it follows, that he alone has a natural knowledge both that he ought to love God, and also of the reasons that oblige him to it.

2. For as brute creatures are fond of their benefactors; so man is under the highest obligations to love God, from whom he has received all that he has; and if he do not, he is more stupid and ungrateful than the beasts that perish. Rom. 12:9; Isa. 1:3. Moreover, as it is the nature of love to exclude all weariness and sadness (which are the effects of hatred and displeasure), and to sweeten and soften all the labors and difficulties that may attend the service of the person beloved (1 Cor. 13:4, etc.); so we are obliged to express our love to God, by all possible tokens of satisfaction and joy; since love is the happiness and comfort of our souls. And in this appear the kindness and love of God towards man, that he does not exact of us a hard, severe, and painful service; but only the sweet, the joyful, the comfortable exercise of love. Love casts out fear, anguish, and torment; otherwise it ceases to be love. Love conquers all

difficulties, and drives away all sorrow, filling the soul with joy and gladness; so that if we love not God, we are without excuse.

3. By this I do not mean, that man, since the fall, can by his own strength and power, perfectly love God as he ought; but to show that every man is convinced in his own conscience, that he ought to love him as well as he can; that he who does not, is worse than the beasts; and that both nature and religion oblige us thereto.

CHAPTER XVIII.

SHOWING THAT OUR DUTY TO GOD TENDS TO PROMOTE OUR OWN HAPPINESS.

By thy commandments is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.—Ps. 19:11.

HAVING sufficiently proved, in the first and second Chapters, that God is an absolute, infinite, and superabundant Good, having all perfection in and of himself, and receiving no benefit from the service and worship of the creature; it follows, that all our religious services, as they cannot be enjoined without a purpose, so they must tend directly to *our* benefit and advantage. All the time and pains, therefore, which we spend in the service of God, are really and truly laid out in the service of ourselves.

2. For so great are the kindness and love of God towards men, that He has pointed out to them the path of love, that they might walk in it, and drink plentifully of the waters of life. O the boundless love of God, who has made even our duty to be our happiness!

3. But here we must not think that we can merit anything by the services which we pay to Him; for, in truth, all the blessings that we receive either in this life or the next, are solely owing to the free grace and favor of God. The sense and meaning of this Chapter then is this: that the virtues or vices of men are neither profitable nor hurtful unto God, but only unto themselves.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE SERVICE WHICH THE CREATURES RENDER TO MAN, COMPARED WITH THAT WHICH MAN RENDERS TO GOD.

My son, keep sound wisdom and discretion: so shall they be life unto thy soul.—PROV. 3:21, 22.

AS we have already shown that there are two sorts of services; one which the creatures render to man, and the other which men render to God, both tending to the sole happiness of man; it remains now that

we show the resemblance and relation that subsists between them. As for the service of the creatures, it is not in the power of man to make any retribution for the good they do us (for everything that we have is God's): nor indeed is it fit to do this, because all the goodness of the creatures is no more than a little stream of divine goodness, flowing to us through them; and to Him alone, the Author and Fountain of all good, all our love and gratitude are due. So then, though a man cannot subsist one moment without the assistance of the creatures, yet are they not the proper objects of our love, but God alone; who, by their services, endeavors to oblige and draw us to a reciprocal love and service to himself. For what advantage is it to us, to live by the help of the creatures, unless we live unto God.

2. This then is the intention of God: to instruct us, by the cheerful services which the creatures pay to us, how cheerfully we ought to love, to serve, and obey him. For as man cannot live without the help of the creatures, such as the air and universal nature; so he spiritually dies unto God whenever he ceases to obey him and to live in Christ. Moreover, as the life of man is nothing worth, if it be not godly and devout; so the service of the creatures profits him nothing, if he also be not active and cheerful in the service of God. And as the natural life is nothing, when compared with a life of godliness and devotion; so the service we pay to God, profits us much more than all the service the creatures pay to us.

3. Nay, he that serveth not God, is not worthy of the service of the creatures; for as they were made for the service of man, so man was made for the service of God; and all the duty they pay to us, is only to encourage us in our duty to our Maker. When this end is not answered, we may not only be said to use the creatures in vain, but to abuse them. The end of all that has been said, is this: that as God has commanded the creatures to contribute to the support of our natural life, he thereby instructs us to devote and dedicate that life entirely to His honor and service.

CHAPTER XX.

ALL THINGS ARE PRESERVED BY THE HAND OF GOD.

The hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek him; but his power and his wrath is against all them that forsake him.—Ezra 8 : 22.

AS man, the noblest of the creatures, cannot subsist one moment without the help of those that are much inferior to himself; it follows, that their being, and the qualities by which they help and assist us, are entirely owing to God. Whosoever denies this, must believe that they who want not our help, must be more worthy than we, who cannot subsist without theirs.

2. But the more natural conclusion would be, that if man cannot subsist without their help, they who are so

much more ignoble than he, must likewise depend on some superior being for their support and preservation. But as He that supports the creatures, also supports mankind by their means, it is plain, that he can be nothing less than the Creator and Maker of all things. For nothing can preserve our being, but he that gave it, and that is God, who ordained the creatures for our sakes, and man for his own.

CHAPTER XXI.

SHOWING THAT FROM THE SERVICE OF MAN AND THE CREATURES, A UNION TAKES PLACE BETWEEN THE VISIBLE WORLD, MAN, AND GOD.

Forasmuch as there is none like unto thee, O Lord; thou art great, and thy name is great in might. Who would not fear thee, O king of nations?—JEREM. 10 : 6, 7.—*If then I be a father, where is mine honor? and if I be a master, where is my fear?*—MAL. 1 : 6.

LET us now consider and admire the wonderful union of all the creatures with God, by that double service of which we have spoken. For as all the creatures were made for the use of man, thence arises a certain relation or union between man and them; as there is by our duty and service to God, between us and him. For as God intended to draw man to himself by the cords of love, so he commanded all the creatures to do service unto man, as being created for his use alone; and this is a strong obligation upon us to love, serve, and honor *him*.

2. Hence we may learn, that all the duty they pay to us, or we to God, tends solely to the good and benefit of man. As for the other creatures, they reap no benefit or advantage from their several labors and services, but only that every one is looked upon to be more or less excellent, in proportion to the service they respectively do to man. So likewise God receives no advantage from our services to him; but the greater love any man has for God, the more noble he is, and the greater benefit he receives. Whence it appears, how wonderfully this twofold service unites the creatures to man, and man to God,

3. And would to God that the bond of union which is between God and man, were as strong as that which is between man and the creatures! They are incessantly employed in the service of man, and never act in a manner contrary to this design of their creation; but man, on the other hand, bursts the yoke, and breaks the bonds of duty which God has laid upon him, debasing himself below the beasts, though so much more noble than they. Now if the laws of nature and reason require the creatures to be obedient to man, as their lord, how much more just and reasonable is it, that man should be obedient unto God? For as the soul is much more noble than the body, so is the inward and spiritual service of God much more excellent than that external and bodily service of the creatures. And thus by the duty and service of man to his Maker, are all the creatures united unto God, and perfected in charity, that they may not be created in vain.

CHAPTER XXII.

FROM THE LOVE WHICH WE OWE TO GOD, PROCEEDS THAT WHICH WE OWE TO OUR NEIGHBOR.

This commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.—1 John 4 : 21.

AS we have already shown above, that our love is entirely due to God, and that this is the first and chief obligation upon us; hence it follows, that it would be highly unjust to alienate that love from him, and fix it upon any other object. As God has appropriated all his love to us, so ought we entirely to consecrate ours to him. For though the creatures indeed do us good, yet they are only agents, and, in truth, *God* does us good by their means, forasmuch as he supports, enables, and commands them to minister to our necessities. Whence it follows, that man also, being a creature of God, appointed to minister to his neighbor, if he does him any service, ought not to claim any honor or love for himself, which are due to God alone.

2. But as man is obliged to love God above all things, so he is thereby bound to unite his will and love with the will and love of God, and to love all mankind as created in the image of God, as freely and sincerely as God himself loves them. And he that saith he loves God, and loves not his brother, created in the image of God, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; for every one that truly loveth God, will love his brother also.

CHAPTER XXIII.

MAN IS MADE IN THE IMAGE OF GOD.

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.—Gen. 1 : 26.

ALL the creatures, in their different orders and degrees of subordination, may be said to imitate their Maker. Those beings that are endued with life and sense come nearer to him than the vegetable; the rational, than the irrational. As, then, all the creatures in their order seem respectively to approach nearer and nearer unto God, and man is the end and perfection of them all, it follows, that he must be in the highest degree of conformity and likeness unto God.

2. For as the wax represents the perfect impression of the seal, so God has fixed a stamp or impression of himself upon all creatures; but to man, before his fall, he gave his own image and the brightness of that glory, which the rest of the creatures partake of in lower degrees. Thus it appears from the orders of created

beings, that man was entirely created after the image of God. And as God is a pure spirit, a holy, just, and understanding mind, so there is in man a spiritual and understanding soul, in which the brightness and glory of the divine image shone and manifested itself.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THAT MAN IS OBLIGED TO LOVE HIS NEIGHBOR AS HIMSELF.

He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love.—1 JOHN 4:8.

AS we were all originally created in the image of God, and he is endeavoring to restore in us this lost image by the Holy Spirit, and to save us in Jesus Christ, it follows, that we ought to love our neighbors, and look upon them not as aliens and strangers, but as our kindred and brethren, having all received from the same God and Father, our life, and breath, and all things. We ought to regard them with the same affection that we do ourselves, that so the image of God, renewed in us by Christ, may not suffer by our fault. Since, then, there is but one image of God in us all, and we have but one Redeemer and one Holy Spirit, how strong ought the bond of love and unity to be betwixt those who represent but one great body, and where all are members one of another? For as our Maker justly claims the first place in our love, so the second is certainly due to them that are created in his image. And because this image resides more particularly in the soul, we are thereby obliged to wish as well to the souls of our neighbors as to our own; so then every man is bound to love his neighbor as to love his God, and that is a necessary consequence of this. For as God has loved man from all eternity, and still continues to love us, by providing plentifully for all the wants of soul and body; he designs thereby, as with the cords of love, to draw us to himself, and to teach us that as he loves us, so ought we also to love one another.

2. Moreover, as religion or the worship of God regards chiefly the good and benefit of the worshipper, it follows, that the love of our neighbor, which arises from our love of God, necessarily tends to the same end. Or shall we say that the image of God in man is profitable to the giver, and not to the receiver? Lastly, as the love of God and of our neighbor is the first and chief duty of man, it must of necessity be also his chief and greatest good; yea, the root and fountain of all the blessings which he can possibly enjoy; so that nothing can strictly be called good to him, that proceeds from any other principle. The more, therefore, we increase and improve in the love of God and of our neighbor, the more do we improve in blessedness and happiness.

CHAPTER XXV.

ALL MANKIND ARE TO BE CONSIDERED AS ONE MAN, OR AS BEING MANY MEMBERS OF ONE GREAT BODY.

Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us? why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother?—Mal. 2: 10.

AS all the creatures, the fire, air, earth, water, sun, moon, and stars, equally and without any respect of persons, serve and minister to mankind, doing the same service to the poor as to the rich; to the peasants as to the citizens; to him that labors for his bread, as to him that sitteth on the throne; by this God teaches us to look upon our neighbor as part of ourselves, and all of us together as making up but one man. And as he has commanded all the creatures to pay honor and obedience to man, he designs thereby to instruct us that we are the image of God, and ought to live in a constant imitation of him.

2. If we do not this, and accept not the service of the creatures with thanksgiving, we are unworthy of the least service from them. Now as the creatures pay equal service to all men, solely on account of the image of God which they bear, how much more incumbent is it upon us to love and honor our neighbor, as bearing that divine image. So that the creatures themselves instruct us by their example in the duties which we owe to one another; for as they regard all mankind but as one man, so ought we to do likewise.

3. Lastly, forasmuch as all of us enjoy the love and favor of the same God; are all equally created in the same image; as the love of God is universal to us all, and his blessings equally bestowed on all; as we all labor under the same necessities, and stand in need of the same mercies, and are obliged to pay him the same duty and service; as we are all partakers of the same nature, and bear the same name (for the poorest and meanest is as truly a man as the greatest); as we all receive an equal tribute of service from the creatures; and, as it is appointed for us all once to die; upon all these accounts we are, each one, obliged to love our neighbors as ourselves, and promote peace, unity, and charity among ourselves.

4. From all that has been said, it appears, that there is a twofold brotherhood among men: First, as we are all the creatures of God, and owe to him our being, and all the comforts and supports of it, as well as the other creatures; and secondly, as we are distinguished from the rest of the creatures, and have a closer and more heavenly relation one to another, being all created in the image and likeness of God. But there is yet a much more noble brotherhood discovered to us in the Gospel, by which we are all brethren of, and in, the Lord Jesus Christ, and members of his spiritual body under Him, our Head, of whose fulness we all receive our different measures and proportions of grace. Ephes. 1: 23.

CHAPTER XXVI.

CHARITY, THE FOUNDATION OF THE GREATEST STRENGTH.

Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.—EPH. 4 : 3.

AS the greatest strength arises from concord, and the greatest weakness from discord; it follows, that the closer this concord is, the greater will the strength be. But in order to be united among ourselves, it is necessary that we begin first with being united unto God. The closer our union is with God, the stronger will it be with our neighbors. For it is impossible that he who is sincerely and heartily united to God by love, should hate his neighbor, whom God so sincerely loves. Yea, the more ardently any man loves God, the more tenderly will he love his neighbor; and the more he loves him, the closer will he be united to him.

2. Upon the diminution or increase of our charity, therefore, depends the decay or increase of our union; and when both are perfect, the strength arising from them is invincible. Whence it plainly appears, that when men love God, they must of necessity love one another, and are thereby united in a perfect bond of union and peace. But when once they come to forget God, and to care for nobody but themselves, then faction and discord arise, which end in ruin and confusion. Here we see the advantages of concord, and the many public and private blessings that flow thence; and how all the miseries that attend confusion and discord, rob us of those blessings, which every single person may enjoy in the safety and peace of the public. In a word, so great are the benefits of this universal love of God and man, that so long as it is preserved, no power can destroy or hurt us.

3. Hitherto we have been ascending by gradual steps, from the lowest creatures to God, our chief Good, being taught and convinced by the creatures, of the obligations under which we are to love and worship God. Hence we descend again from the Creator to the creature; that is, from the love of our Creator, to the love of the creatures.

CHAPTER XXVII.

OF THE NATURE, PROPERTIES, AND FRUITS OF LOVE.

Take heed that the light which is in thee be not darkness.—LUKE 11 : 35.

THAT nothing is properly our own but our love, is too plain to need any proof. Hence, if our love be good, and rightly applied, our hearts and the treasures that are in them, are good likewise; but if otherwise, then

we ourselves and all that we have, are evil. It is our love only that makes us either good or bad. And as, when our love is right and duly placed, there can be nothing better; so, when it is otherwise, there can be nothing worse.

2. And, since we can call nothing our own but our love, it follows, that on whatsoever being we place our love, to that we dedicate ourselves and all that we have. Whensoever we abuse or misapply our love, we throw away and lose all that we have. So then, if all our goodness consist in the rectitude of our love, and all our evil in the misapplying of it; it follows, that virtue itself is nothing else but our love, truly and properly placed; and vice nothing else but a perverse and irregular love. Whosoever considers these properties of love, cannot be ignorant wherein the greatest good, and the greatest evil of man, consist.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

LOVE UNITES HIM WHO LOVES WITH THE PERSON LOVED, AND TRANSFORMS INTO THE SAME NATURE.

God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.—1 John 4:16.

LOVE unites itself to the beloved object, because it is the nature of love to communicate itself willingly and freely to every person or being that is disposed to receive it. For love is a free gift, and cannot be obtained by force. And as it is the nature of a gift, to be entirely in the power of him to whom the last owner gave it; so our love is entirely appropriated to him on whom we have bestowed it, so that we truly give up ourselves to that thing on which we fix our love. Thus the beloved is united with the lover, and they two become one, not by constraint or force, but freely, willingly, and joyfully: and so he who loves is made one with the thing beloved, and love takes its denomination from its object. Hence we read of *carnal* love, *earthly* love, and *divine* love, each taking its name and character from the objects on which it is fixed. Thus then every man has it in his power to be changed with freedom and ease into a being more noble than himself.

2. Moreover, as the will, without controversy, undergoes a change in love, and every change ought to be from an ignoble to a more noble state of being (as we see the elements are changed into plants and herbs, and these into the flesh of living creatures, and they again into the substance of human bodies), it would, therefore, be unnatural to fix our love upon, and, consequently, to be united and changed into, anything that is meaner than ourselves, but rather upon God, the best and supreme Being; to whom, according to the order of nature, our love and will ought to be united. Thus we hear, as it were, the whole creation calling to us, and putting us in mind of the supreme excellency of God; upon which account He, and He alone, is worthy of our love.

CHAPTER XXIX.

NOTHING IS WORTHY OF OUR LOVE, BUT THAT WHICH CAN MAKE US MORE NOBLE AND PURE.

Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world.—1 JOHN 2 : 15.

AS our love is the most noble present we can make, and has a power of changing our will into the nature of the thing beloved, so that we are under the control of that which we heartily love; it follows, that we act meanly and unworthily, when we give to anything that is vile and earthly, the power of enslaving our will, which is a spiritual faculty, and, consequently, more noble than anything corporeal: and that he is very unhappy and foolish, who places his love on his body, and the gratifications of sense, for instance, on his furniture, equipage, houses, and estates; all which debase the soul, and can yield it no satisfaction in trouble, no comfort in the hour of death, or in the day of judgment. Nothing can do this but God, who is the highest and chief Good, and alone is worthy of our love.

2. We must not, therefore, waste our love on anything that is not sensible of the honor we pay it, nor able to make us a worthy return for it, much less on things that corrupt and debase it, making it earthly, sensual, and unprofitable. On the other hand, as God loves us above all creatures, he deserves a suitable love from us; and that not only as he raises and ennobles our love, but as he requites us with his own, which is infinite, uncreated and eternal.

CHAPTER XXX.

OUR CHIEF LOVE IS DUE TO GOD, AS THE FIRST AND LAST, THE BEGINNING AND THE END OF ALL THINGS.

He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.—DEUT. 32 : 4.

NOT only the universal voice of nature, but our own consciences also bear witness that our chief and highest love is due to God. 1. Because he is our chief and eternal Good. 2. Because not only man, but all other creatures derive their being from him. 3. Because the love and goodness of God are conveyed unto man by all the creatures. Whence it follows, that God, who is the fountain of goodness and love, deserves to be loved by us more than any creature, yea, than all the creatures put to-

gether; they being no more than means or instruments of conveying to us the transcendent and eternal love of God. So that our love is never true, right, regular, or reasonable, but when it is fixed upon God; which may be properly called the rectitude of our will.

2. On the other hand, when self-love predominates, and a man makes all his love centre upon himself, that love is unnatural, preposterous, unjust, and irregular, a direct opposition to God, and the root and seed of all sin and iniquity. For what can be more unjust and ungrateful than to withdraw our love from God, who alone has a right to it, and to fix it upon ourselves or upon any creature? This, in short, is the highest injustice, and the highest violation of the laws of nature, as well as of God.

CHAPTER XXXI.

HE WHO PRINCIPALLY LOVES HIMSELF, ACTUALLY SETS UP HIMSELF IN GOD'S STEAD.

O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces.—Dan. 9: 7.—*Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory.*—Ps. 115: 1.

AS God is the beginning and end of all things, so the first and chief love of man is due to him. And whosoever transfers it to any other object, really and truly makes that his god; which is the greatest affront that can be offered to his divine Majesty. For as it is the nature of love to unite the lover with the thing beloved, so the fixing of our love upon any creature separates and alienates us from the Creator. Whosoever principally loves himself, certainly loves everything else solely for his own sake; which he ought to love purely for the sake of God; and so all his love is founded in and upon himself, which ought to be fixed entirely upon God.

2. Hence he is employed in doing his own will instead of God's; he usurps God's right; attempts to invade his kingdom; sets up an authority in opposition to God's kingdom; and actually rebels against his Maker and his God.

CHAPTER XXXII.

LOVE TO GOD, THE SOURCE OF ALL THAT IS GOOD; SELF-LOVE, THE SOURCE OF ALL EVIL.

O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thine help.—Hos. 13 : 9.

LOVE is the efficient cause of all things; and as there are two sorts of love, the love of God and the love of ourselves, and as these are directly opposite to each other, it follows, that the one must be extremely good, and the other extremely evil. But forasmuch as it is plain that the preference is to be given to divine love, it follows, that this alone is good. For the love of God is a divine seed in us, from which no evil, but all good things proceed. This love unites itself to its object, which is God, its chief, its only Good, in whom it rests, triumphs, and rejoices, even as God does in it. For joy and pleasure arise from love, as we learn in Psalm 18 : 1, 2. This spreads itself over all the world, and, like God, its author and object, communicates and bestows itself upon every worthy receiver. And truly, as love finds all things in God, and is happy in the enjoyment of him, it stands in need of no creature.

2. But as from divine love proceeds nothing but good, so from self-love proceeds nothing but evil. This is the root of all the iniquity, sin, blindness, ignorance, and misery, of which human nature is capable. By this a man makes his own will his god; and, as the true God is the fountain of all good, so this false god, this vain idol, our self-will, is the fountain of all evil. Moreover, as the creatures which we are so fond of, are made out of nothing, and are so weak and uncertain that they are always tending to their original state, and, in the meantime, are nothing but poverty, misery, and sorrow; it follows, that as man is changed into the nature of the thing which he loves, he must likewise partake of their inconstancy, their poverty, and misery, and can have no rest in the enjoyment of them. If the creature is vanity and sorrow, the heart that cleaves to the creature enters into its vanity, and must be partaker of its sorrow.

3. Thus self-love, when it rules and is uppermost in men, makes them enemies to God, fills them with all iniquity, and brings them into subjection to the creatures. As the love of God dilates and enlarges the soul, so the love of ourselves contracts and straitens it, making it unjust, corrupt, proud, and covetous. As the love of God makes us quiet, easy, peaceable, and benevolent; so the love of ourselves makes us unquiet, turbulent, and ill-natured. As the love of God reinstates us in the liberty of the sons of God; so self-love makes us slaves to the creatures. The one gives us firmness and constancy of mind and will; the other makes us inconstant and changeable. The one makes a man courteous, courageous, generous, and obliging; the other makes him sour, timorous, mean, and an enemy to everybody but himself.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

OF THE LOVE OF GOD, AND THE LOVE OF SELF.

The carnal mind is enmity against God.—Rom. 8 : 7.

AS it is plain that by the love of God, or the love of self, all the motions and operations of our will are governed and directed, and that all other desires and inclinations have their birth and bias from them; it follows, that upon them depends all our knowledge, either of good or evil. For as the love of God is the principle by which we know and judge of all the good that is in man; so self-love discovers to us all the evil. And whosoever understands not what self-love is, knows not what evils there are in man; just as he that understands not the love of God, cannot know the good that is in Him. For no man can judge of either good or evil who knows not the springs and fountains from which they flow. The love of God is a shining light, discovering to us not only itself, but its enemy, which is self-love; on the contrary, self-love is a thick darkness, blinding the eyes of men, that they cannot see the good or evil that is in them. These, then, are the two roots of good and evil, which, whosoever is ignorant of, cannot rightly judge of either.

2. For as man consists of two parts, namely, soul and body; so in respect of one, he sets his heart upon honors, dignities, and preferments; whilst the other tempts and draws him to fleshly and sensual pleasures. So that whosoever thus loves himself, must be a slave either to honor or pleasure, which he looks upon as his greatest happiness, as gratifying that inclination to himself, which is uppermost in his heart. And from these two kinds of self-love spring many others, as various as are the means and instruments of obtaining the honors, or fulfilling the lusts, which have taken possession of our hearts. And these are chiefly three: 1. Pride, or an inclination to be eminent and popular in the world. 2. Pleasure and luxury, by which we indulge and gratify the flesh. 3. Covetousness, or an inordinate love of worldly things. Whosoever eagerly seeks honor, cannot but hate everything and every person that stands in his way and hinders his designs; whence proceed anger, revenge and envy of all those who are possessed of any advantages which we want, or which seem to eclipse or lessen the figure which we desire to make in the world. Hence also proceed indolence and sloth, and a mean fear of laboring or sufferings, both of which are ungrateful to flesh and blood. In a word, all sins and iniquities proceed from this fruitful fountain of self-love.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

LOVE TO GOD, THE ONLY SOURCE OF PEACE AND UNITY.

Above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.—COL. 3 : 14.

IF all men had an equal love for God, the supreme Good, they would then all be of one heart and of one mind, and the sincerity and unanimity which they would manifest in the love of God, would cordially unite them to each other.

2. But instead of this, every man loves himself, and pursues the inclinations of his own heart, so that hardly two can agree together. For as he whose heart is set upon honor, cannot but hate and envy every one that is preferred before him; so from these different interests and inclinations, nothing can proceed but emulation, strife, and discord. Moreover, as he that pursues his own will, and courts the esteem of men, makes himself his own god, there must by consequence be as many of these idols and false gods as there are proud, ambitious men in the world. Hence arise envy, hatred, wars, and fightings, whilst every one is bent upon increasing and defending his own grandeur, in opposition to that of his neighbors. Hence it plainly appears that as the love of God is the bond of peace and union; so self-love is the root and cause of all the discord and contention that is in the world.

CHAPTER XXXV.

SHOWING HOW WE OUGHT TO LOVE GOD.

Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned.—1 TIM. 1 : 5.

THERE is no better way of convincing a man than by appealing to his own conscience. There, as in a glass, we may read our duty much more plainly than ten thousand teachers can instruct us. We have already shown that it is a point of natural equity to love God above all things, and that he who does otherwise, sets himself up as his own idol. And now, if any man desire to know to what his duty to God obliges him, let him look into himself, and examine his own heart, and conclude that whatsoever he would have done for himself, *that* he is obliged to do for God. Therefore, as self-love is natural to us all, we must reverse that, and offer to God that which we unjustly arrogate to ourselves, by loving him as we have hitherto loved ourselves.

2. Wherefore, as thou now lovest thine own will, and endeavorest to gratify it in all things, so thou must,

for the future, prefer the will of God to thine own will, and think it better to submit to God's good pleasure than to humor and gratify thyself. Thou art in love with honor and esteem, and wouldest have everybody bow to thy superior merit and character; turn now this inclination of thine, and apply it to promote the glory of God, and pray that all men may unite to do the same. As thou hast hitherto been angry with every one that has opposed thee in thy pursuits of glory, so oughtest thou now to oppose those that oppose the glory of God.

3. Whilst thy heart is full of self-love, thou art greedy of praise, and wouldest have everybody think and speak well of thee; do thou the same for God; labor and pray that God may be glorified by all men, and that every creature may praise and magnify His name. As thou art very industrious to be thought a man of truth and honesty, and wouldest be very uneasy to be counted a liar; so oughtest thou also cheerfully and industriously to propagate and vindicate the truth and veracity of God. From all which it appears that every man may read in the book of his own conscience the obligation he is under to love and honor God rather than himself.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

DIVINE JOY, THE FRUIT OF DIVINE LOVE.

Let all those that put their trust in thee rejoice.—Ps. 5 : 11.

THE end and perfection of everything is the fruit it bears, or the effects it produces, which are as various as the seeds from whence they spring. Therefore, as there are two different seeds or roots in man, namely, the love of God and the love of ourselves, which are diametrically opposite to each other; so likewise are the fruits which they produce. Now the end and fruit of all human actions is either joy or sorrow. Joy, as it is a good fruit, must necessarily proceed from a good root; and sorrow, being evil, must proceed from an evil root; that is, in short, all true joy must proceed from the love of God, and all sorrow and anguish of mind from the love of ourselves.

2. For as all joy arises from love, and depends upon it, such as is the *love*, such also must be the *joy*. If the love be divine, the joy will be divine; if earthly, the joy also will be earthly. Now so long as our hearts are united to God by true love, they cannot but rejoice and be happy in him. This is a foretaste of eternal life, in which both our love and our joy shall be completed and perfected together. Therefore, as we shall there live eternally unto God, so our love also shall be eternal; and as our love shall be perfected, so it shall be united with a perfect, absolute, infinite, and eternal good, being itself also perfect, unchangeable, constant, and eternal. And from a love so pure, immaculate, and heavenly, shall flow a river of joy, divine, pure, precious, full of

rapture, full of grace, glory, and immortality.

3. For eternal life itself is nothing but this eternal joy, with some drops of which, faithful souls, even in this life, have been often refreshed and comforted. This is the meaning of that passage in Canticles 2:4, "He brought me to the banqueting-house: stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples." And whosoever has tasted of this joy, can have no relish for worldly pleasures. But as that proceeds from the true love of God, arising from faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, it follows, that if we desire to obtain so great a good, and, by tasting some drops of this sweetness, to enjoy this earnest and foretaste of everlasting life, it must be obtained by a lively faith, operating by divine love. Whence St. Paul tells us that "the love of Christ passeth knowledge." Eph. 3:19.

4. And as this divine love is not a thing *without* us, but *within* us, it follows that this does not depend upon our external goods or possessions, such as riches, honors, learning, meat, or drink, or any other outward blessing; but that all these things are contained *in it*. And as this love shall attain its full perfection in the other life, so the peace and joy that flow from it, shall be perfect and everlasting. This treasure a man shall have in himself, and no one shall take it from him; he shall have a river of living pleasure rising up in himself, independent of all external blessings and comforts. And as no man knoweth this treasure, but he that has it; so he that has it, is in perfect ease; he envies nobody, covets nothing, thirsts after nothing but the fulness and perfection of divine love.

5. The first fruits of this treasure may be possessed by faithful souls even in this life, without lessening the reversion in the next life; yea, it rather increases and spreads itself to infinite degrees, so that though all mankind should unite together in this divine love, they would be no hinderance to each other, but would rather increase and improve their united stock of love and joy. For the more earnestly any man loves God, the greater is his joy. And if it be so in this world, how great shall our joy be in the next, when God shall pour out the fulness of his joy and love upon his elect, and He himself shall be "all in all." 1 Cor. 15:28.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

OF THE EVIL FRUITS OF SELF-LOVE.

Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: and let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness.—JAMES 4:9.

AS true and divine joy proceeds from true and divine love, so nothing can proceed from false love but false joy. For as self-love aims at nothing, delights in nothing but honors, riches, and sensual and worldly pleasures, all which are fading, perishing, and subject to a thousand casualties; therefore the man whose heart is set upon them, cannot but be always

fearful, apprehensive, and jealous of every accident that may deprive him of his happiness; so that his joys are never solid or lasting, but false and perishing, mixed with fears and cares, and ending in disappointment and sorrow. For as the seed is, such is the fruit.

2. Now we have already shown, that self-love is corrupt, impure, unjust, abominable, and unnatural, the seed and root of all evil, the parent of weakness, blindness, error, and death. And the fruit or joy arising from it is of the same sort, unjust, impure, opposed to God, to our neighbor, and to all righteousness; it rejoices in iniquity, and contempt of God. And if it be a sin only to love anything which God hateth, how much more grievous a sin must it be to delight and rejoice in it? Such a joy as this, which is opposite to the nature of every creature, and contrary to the nature and express will of God, cannot but end in everlasting sorrow, death, and darkness.

3. For as divine joy brings us nearer and nearer to God; so carnal joy carries us farther and farther from him. Divine joy makes us the friends of God; but worldly joy makes us his enemies. The former confirms and strengthens the will in the love of God, makes the conscience easy, cheerful, and happy; the latter disquiets and torments the soul, making it turbulent, restless, and uneasy. That may be obtained without labor or charge; this requires both, and all too little to support and secure it. The one produces, improves, and preserves love, peace, and friendship among men; the other creates discord, contentions and quarrels, wars, violence, and bloodshed. From the one all good, from the other all evil things proceed. The one is a lively, salutary, and sober joy, full of virtue, full of pleasure, and acceptable to God; the other is fleshly, vicious, dishonest, base, and hated of God. The one increases our devout longings after God and goodness; the other inflames our corrupt desires. That enlightens the understanding, filling it with divine light and wisdom; this darkens and blinds it, and fills it with ignorance and error. That is true and substantial; this treacherous, deceitful, and false.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

EVERLASTING SORROW AND DEATH, THE END OF SELF-LOVE AND CARNAL JOY.

If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die.—Rom. 8 : 13.

As we have already shown everlasting joy to be the genuine fruit of divine love; it follows, that without that love, we cannot be partakers of the joy, but must sit down at the last in eternal anguish and distress. For when the condemned sinner comes to reflect and consider, that by his own fault, he has irrecoverably lost all the blessings of a happy eternity, how great must his sorrow, how bitter must his grief be! Annihilation itself would be to him a blessing; but alas! he wishes for it in vain, he

must bear his burden, and undergo his punishment to all eternity.

2. This must raise in him an eternal hatred and abhorrence of himself, and all his adherent impurities and sin; which, whether he will or not, will forever stare him in the face, revenging, as it were, upon him the past sacrilege of his self-love.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

ALL THAT WE HAVE MUST BE OFFERED AND CONSECRATED TO GOD.

O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker.—Ps. 95:6.

AS we are assured that God is our Creator, Preserver, and loving Father, to whom can we more reasonably pay our honor, duty, and service, than to him? Whom shall we rather implore and pray to, whom shall we rather praise and glorify, than him that made us? Whom shall we rather trust? In whom shall we rather hope? Whom shall we rather love? In whom shall we rather rejoice and be happy? Shall we not love him, who hath created us in his own image? Shall we not honor him, who has exalted us above all creatures? Shall we not devote ourselves entirely to him, who has given himself entirely unto us? Who created us for the end that we might live, abide, and rejoice with him forever? Shall we not love and honor him, who has adopted us for his children?

2. Think, therefore, and consider with thyself, O man! that as God has given thee a rational soul, so thou oughtest to consecrate all the powers and faculties of it to his honor and service. He has given thee the faculty of loving: therefore love him; he has given thee understanding: endeavor to know him; he has given thee fear: therefore fear him; the power of honoring: therefore honor him; the gift of prayer: therefore pray to him; of praise and thanksgiving: therefore praise his name. He has given thee the power of believing, hoping, and trusting: therefore depend, and trust, and hope in him; of rejoicing: therefore rejoice and be glad in him. Lastly, as all things are in him, and he has an infinite power of doing all things, consider this with thyself, that if thou rest and rejoice in him alone, thou shalt in him possess all things.

3. And hence arises the true and genuine worship of God. He that loves him, honors him; he that loves him not, affronts him. So likewise he that fears him, honors him; he that fears not, despises him. And all the other vices and virtues are of the same nature. By obedience, God is honored, and he is dishonored by disobedience; the same may be said of faith, hope, charity, and gratitude.

4. From all this it appears, that there is nothing better, more honorable, or more profitable for man, than to honor God; and nothing more base and abominable than to dishonor him.

CHAPTER XL.

HE CAN NEVER PRAISE AND GLORIFY GOD, WHO SEEKS HIS OWN GLORY.

Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory.—Ps. 115:1.

HE that in all things seeks not the glory of God, and endeavors to promote it, does not act like a creature of God, but directly opposes his Maker, and all his designs, seeing he made all things for his own glory. And he does even worse, who measures all things no otherwise than as they contribute to the raising of his own glory and honor. Such a one usurps the honor due to God alone, and, like the rebel Lucifer, sets himself in God's throne.

2. And this he does not only in his own soul, but endeavors to lead others into the same guilt, by filling their hearts, which ought to be thrones and temples of God, with the same notions of love and honor to himself, as he has entertained in his own mind; endeavoring as much as in him lies, to dispossess his Maker and settle himself in his room. But what greater sin can there be than this? Now as the consequence of this irregular loving and honoring a man's self is, that it makes him the enemy of God, and casts him out of his presence into the pit of destruction, it follows, that he who would be the friend of God, must hate and deny himself.

3. Return, therefore, and repent, O man! believe in Christ and live in him as a new creature, and he will receive thee and comfort thee. But to others, who persist in their rebellion and continue in their corruptions, he shall say at the last day: "I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity!" Matt. 7:23. Moreover, as the love of Christ is our chief good, our highest wisdom, and the perfection of our knowledge, and self-love is perfectly opposite to it: let us be persuaded to cast out the love of ourselves and of the world, that the love of Christ may enter into our hearts. This is that love which perfects and accomplishes our Christianity, and with this do thou, O God, refresh and satisfy our souls for ever and ever. Amen.

CONCLUSION.

1. The title "True Christianity" is prefixed to these Four Books for the reason that true faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and the righteousness which proceeds from faith, constitute the fountain from which the whole Christian life must flow. I have, accordingly, written, not for heathens, but for Christians; who have, it is true, adopted the Christian faith, but whose life does not accord with it, and who deny, or will not understand, the power of faith. 2 Tim. 3:5. I have written, not for unbelievers, but for believers; not for those who are yet to be justified, but for those who are already justified. Hence, this whole work on daily repentance and Christian love, ought to be understood in no other sense, than that faith must go before as a light in our path, and that it is the foundation of all. Let no one, by any means, suppose that anything is here ascribed to our carnal

free will or to good works; our sole object is to persuade you, as you are a Christian, and are anointed with the Spirit of God, to let Christ live in you, and rule in you, and to let the Holy Spirit govern you, in order that your Christianity may not be hypocrisy.

2. Hence, too, Part II. of this Fourth Book is not to be so understood, as if we could love God from our own carnal will; for love is a fruit of the Holy Spirit. This Part II. is, on the contrary, only intended to show that, besides the Word of God, the Holy Scriptures, even our own heart and conscience may teach us, from the book of nature, and the light of nature, that we are bound to love God on account of his great love bestowed upon us, and manifested through the means of all his creatures. Such an argument, derived from nature, ought to convince every man, whether he be a heathen or a Christian, a believer or an unbeliever; and no one can refute it. For, granting that God has bestowed so many mercies on us, who can deny that we are in gratitude obliged to so gracious a benefactor? And as he calls and invites us to love him, by all the creatures which are bestowed in common upon all mankind, who can deny that the love of God is discovered to us in the book of nature, and that the heathens themselves may be convinced by arguments drawn thence? "The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein." Ps. 111:2. And, "Thou Lord, hast made me glad through thy work; I will triumph in the works of thy hands." Ps. 92:4. How can these works be more effectually praised, than in this manner? The Lord God give us understanding and wisdom, that we may know him and praise him for all his works, both here and forevermore. Amen.

INDEX.

The Roman Numerals indicate, respectively, the Four Books; the first Arabic numeral which follows, designates, in every case, the *Chapter;* the second, with any that may follow, refers to one or more *Sections* of a chapter. The references to the INTRODUCTION, the PREFACES, the two PARTS of Book IV., etc., will be readily understood.

A.

ABRAHAM—an example of patience, II. 47. 16.
—— the time when the promise was given to him, I. 12. 7.
ABSOLUTION FROM SIN, I. 21. 13.
AGRICOLA, INTROD. § 15.
ADAM—his fall, I. Chap. 2; II. 17. 9; II. 34. Sect. 4. 1.
ADAM AND CHRIST, contrasted, II. 7. 1–6.
AFFLICTION—its uses, II. 5. 3; II. 35. 5.
—— none for which God has not provided consolation, II. Chap. 48.
AHAB—his delusion, I. 38. 13.
ANGER of God—what is meant by the expression, II. 42. 11.
ANTINOMISTIC Controversy, INTROD. § 15.
APOLOGY of Augsburg Confession, INTROD. § 25.
APOSTASY—when man is guilty of it, II. 23. 4.
ARNDT—account of his life, INTROD. § 1, etc.
—— his motives in writing the "True Christianity," PREF. to Book I. 1; INTROD. §§ 20, 21, 24, 31.
—— his orthodoxy, INTROD. §§ 22, 24, 25, 40.
—— his religious character, INTROD. § 26.
—— popularity of his "True Christianity," INTROD. § 31.
—— translations of it, INTROD. § 33, and Note.
—— his death, INTROD. § 22.
ASCENSION of Christ (see CHRIST, etc.), II. 25. 11.
ASPIRATIONS of the believer, I 11. 11.
AUGSBURG, CONFESSION OF—Conclusion of Book II., p. 374.
—— INTROD. §§ 24, 25.
—— PREF. to Book I. 8.
AUGSBURG INTERIM, INTROD. §§ 12, 15.
AUGSBURG, PEACE OF, INTROD. § 12.
AUGUSTINE—quoted, III. 6. 2.

B.

BABYLAS, II. 45. 8.
BAPTISM—a means to attain the new birth, I. 3. 12.
—— a renewal of the covenant with God, II. 2. 6.
—— what is received therein, III. 1. 4.
BELIEVING SOUL, a—its beauty, III. 4. 2.
BIRTH (see NEW BIRTH; REGENERATION)—twofold, I. 3. 2, etc.
BLESSEDNESS of the true believer, I. 8. 7; I. 11. 10; I. 12. 5; I. 13. 6; I. 22. 10; I. 34. 17; I. 36. 7.
BOEHM, INTROD. §§ 32, 34, 35.
BONAVENTURA—a saying of his, II. 6. 6.
BOOK OF LIFE, I. 11. 1.
BREAD, IV. Part I., Chap. 3. 14. 35–39.

C.

CÆSAR, JULIUS, I. 27. 5.
CALLING OF GOD—inward, III. 8. 3.
—— outward, III. 8. 1.

CALUMNY—consolations, II. 17. 4, etc.
—— consolatory Scripture passages, II. 17. 13, etc.
—— how to be overcome, II. Ch. 17.
—— why the Lord permits it, II. 17. 9.
CATECHISM, Five Parts of Luther's, III. 1. 4.
CATECHISMS, LUTHER'S TWO, INTROD. § 25.
CHADDOCK, REV. C., INTROD. § 36.
CHARITY (see LOVE, etc.)—the foundation of strength, IV. Part 2, Ch. 26.
CHRIST (see ASCENSION; DEATH; INCARNATION; MERIT; RESURRECTION, etc.)—all recovered in him, that was lost in Adam, II. 34., Sect. I.
—— denied and crucified again, I. 9. 1, etc.
—— encouragements derived from his sufferings, II. 18. 9; II. 45. 5.
—— furnishes a pattern of prayer, II. 20. 10.
—— his complaint, continued, II. 15. 1–6.
—— his humiliation, II. 13. 5, etc.; Ch. 14.
—— his humility, and its lessons, II. 12. 3.
—— his kindness, II. 8. 8; II. Ch. 26.
—— his life, a mirror for us, II. 11. 3; II. 14. 3.
—— his patience, the consideration of which alleviates the burden of the cross, II. Ch. 56.
—— his perfect obedience, II. 19. 1.
—— his Person is indivisible, II. 10. 15.
—— his poverty, II. 13. 2, etc.; II. 14. 1, etc.
—— his righteousness, III. 1. 4.
—— his sufferings, foreknown to him, II. 18. 2.
—— his three kinds of trouble, II. 15. 3.
—— how he humbled himself, II. 13. 8, etc.
—— how he perfects his work in the hearts of the faithful, III. Ch. 15.
—— how he manifests himself to the soul, II. Ch. 27.
—— our example, I. 1. 7; I. 3. 10; I. 11. 2; I. 15. 6; I. 37. 11; I. 39. 7; II. 13. 1; II. 44. 8.
—— our help in prayer, II. 38. 2.
—— teaches us how to bear the cross, II. 15. 1, etc.
—— the image of God, I. 1. 7.
—— the only Head of the Church, II. 16. 7.
—— the only Saviour, I. 12. 2.
—— the true Book of Life, II. Ch. 13; II. 19. 1–9.
—— the two Natures of, in one Person, II. 6. 1; II. 52. 2.
—— the union of the two Natures of, indissoluble and eternal, II. 6. 2.
—— washing the feet of his disciples, II. 21. 3.
CHRIST, what an excellent gift he is, II. 1. 5. (a)—(b).
—— what he is to the soul, II. 1. 4, (b); III. 6. 3.
—— wherein his highest glory consisted, II. 16. 3, etc.
—— why he took upon himself our nature, I. 3. 6; I. 11. 9.
—— why his sufferings were so severe, II. 18. 2–8.
CHRIST CRUCIFIED—benefits of the contemplation of, II. 20. 15.
—— what he teaches us, II. 19. 2, etc.
CHRISTIAN, THE—a stranger and pilgrim, I. 17. 4, 7.
—— demonstrated by practising the word of God, II. 5. 4, 5.
—— his manner of using temporal things, I. 17. 5.
—— is anointed and baptized with the Holy Spirit, II. 35. 2.
—— the false, condemned, I. 7. 4.
—— value of the name, II. 11. 2.
CHRISTIANITY—wherein it consists, PREF. to Book I. 5; I. 39. 7.
CITIES OF REFUGE, I. 21. 15, 16.
COMFORT, HEAVENLY—how to taste it, I. 36. 13.
—— why God sometimes delays to afford it, II. Ch. 55.
COMMANDMENTS, TEN—a test, II. 4. 3.
CONCLUSION of Book II. page 374.
—— of Book IV. page 488.
CONSCIENCE—pangs of, II. 10. 9.
—— three qualities impressed on it, I. 7. 1.
—— *see also* I. 23. 9; IV. Part 2. 35. 1.
CONSOLATION—in affliction, II. Ch. 48.
—— means of obtaining it, II. 48. 10, etc.
CONTEMPT of the world—how to bear it, II. 15. 7–16.
CONVERSATION of a believing soul with God, II. Ch. 39; II. 48. 13.
CONVERSATION between faith and the mercy of God, II. Ch. 40.
CONVERSION (see REPENTANCE, etc.)—pardon bestowed after it, I. 37. 21.
—— a work of divine grace, II. 9. 9.
CORRUPTION of human nature (see ORIGINAL SIN)—early and later manifestations, I. 2. 5, 6.
—— its ultimate result, I. 2. 10.
—— its greatness, I. 8. 8; I. 11. 5, etc.
—— the knowledge of the, I. 42. 3.

Covenant of grace—a source of consolation, II. 2. 6.
—— the remembrance of the, a help in prayer, II. 38. 11.
Covetousness—its folly, I. 17. 7.
Creation—work of the First Day of, IV. Part I. Ch. 1.
—— work of the Second Day of, IV. Part I. Ch. 2.
—— work of the Third Day of, IV. Part I. Ch. 3.
—— work of the Fourth Day of, IV. Part I. Ch. 4.
—— work of the Fifth Day of, IV. Part I. Ch. 5.
—— work of the Sixth Day of, IV. Part I. Ch. 6.
Creatures of God—how they furnish evidence of divine love, II. 26. 7, etc.; II. 29. 5, etc.
—— how they invite us to praise God, II. 42. 14.
—— when converted into idols, I. 18. 9.
Creatures, The living—all remind us of the love which we owe to God, IV. Part II. Ch. 15.
—— the work of the Sixth Day, IV. Part I. Ch. 6.
Cross, The—how to bear it, I. 40. V.
—— taking it up, II, 10. 4.
—— the benefits of it, II. 46, 15.
—— the mystery of it, III. Ch. 23.
Cross of Christ—I. 4. 4–6; I. 15. 8.
—— a branch of it, II. 18. 1.
Cryptocalvinistic Controversy, Introd. § 15.
Cyprian—quoted, Pref. to Book III. 5.

D.

Darkness, Spiritual, I. 11. 3.
David, King, I. 17. 11.
—— his example, II. 5. 2.
—— reason of his desire to lead a holy life, II. 5. 6.
Death, II. 8. 11; II. 57. 20, etc.
—— consolations, and remedies against the fear of, II. Ch. 57.
—— persons raised from, II. 57. 8.
—— Spiritual, I. 41. 11, 12.
—— three kinds of, I. 12. 2.
—— why the time of it is concealed from us, II. 8. 11.
Death of Christ (see Christ), II. 2. 7; II. 25. 9; II. 26. 3; II. 57. 2.
Devil; see Satan.
Dependence on self—a grievous sin, II. 23. 2, etc.
Depravity, Human; see Corruption; Original Sin.
Despair, I. 40. VIII.
Devotions, Private, III. Ch. 12.
Dionysius, St.—quoted, IV. Part I. 1. 6.
Doctrine of Christ, II. 25. 8.
Doctrine, Purity of—declared by Arndt to be "the foremost point of true Christianity," Introd. § 24.
—— how preserved, I. 38. 11; I. 39. 1, etc.
—— its necessity, I. 39. 3.
—— maintained by Paul and others, I. 39. 2.
—— the example of Christ, of the prophets, and of the apostles in this respect, I. 39. 4.
Duty to our neighbor (see Love), I. 31. 4.
Dying—daily, to the world, II. 10. 14.
—— to the flesh and sin, I. 12. 8, etc.
—— unto self, I. 13. 1, etc.

E.

Eating of Christ, The—what it is, I. 36, 10.
Eisleben, Introd. § 22.
Election of grace, I. 38. 6, 7.
Enemies—how to be treated, I. 40. X.
Enlightened, To be, I. 37. 3.
—— when impossible, I. 37. 7–9.
Envy, I. 40. XI.
Eternity of future punishments, I. 7. 5; II. 8. 13.
Example of Christ (see Christ; Saints)—advantage of following it, I. 38. 9.
Examples—of Moses and David, in praising God, II. 41. 12.
—— of pardoned sinners, II. 2. 10.
—— of persons raised from death, II. 57. 8.
Existence of God—taught by the conscience, I. 7. 2.
Exorcism, Introd. §§ 6–8.
Exposition of the consolation given in 1 Cor. 1 : 3–7—II. Ch. 48.

F.

Faith—as distinguished from hope, II. 50. 1.
—— a weak faith, I. 5. 9.
—— a weak faith is, nevertheless, *faith*, II. 51. 9, etc.
—— by it, the soul is united to Christ, III. 3. 3.

FAITH, comfort for those who are weak in, II. Ch. 51.
—— examples confirming it, I. 13. 3–5.
—— gives quietness to the soul, II. 34. Sect. 7. 2.
—— it renews the whole man, III. 3. 7.
—— its glory, III. 3. 6.
—— its influence, I. 5. 2; I. 5. 9; I. 6. 6; I. 11. 4; I. 39. 10; I. 5. 9; II. 4. 1.
—— its purifying influence, III. Ch. 9.
—— its strength varies, II. 51. 10.
—— its victory, III. 3. 5, 9.
—— means for strengthening it, II. 51. 16.
—— the source of all the Christian virtues, PREF. to Book I. 6. 7.
—— the true source of religion, II. 4. 6.
—— the true way of obtaining the believer's inward treasure, III. 2. 1, etc.
—— the work of God, I. 34. 14; II. 51. 2, 15.
—— what it is, I. 5. 1; I. 21. 9; I. 34. 12.
—— working by love, I. 24. 12; I. 32. 1.
FALL of Adam—how it was occasioned, I. 2. 2.
—— its consequences, I. 2. 1, 3, 4.
FASTING, II. 9. 15, etc.
FEDDERSON, INTROD. § 36.
FLESH—its conflict with the Spirit, I. 16. 2, etc.
FLOURISHING like a palm tree—explained, I. 22. 4.
FOLLOWING Christ—I. 37. 14.
—— the sum of Christianity, I. 18. 2.
FORMULA of Concord, INTROD. §§ 15, 24, 25; PREF. to Book I. 8; Conclusion of Book II. p. 374.
FRUITS—the marks of true and false Christians, I. 39. 9.
FUTURE punishments, Eternity of, I. 7. 5.

G.

GLORIFICATION of our bodies, II. 57. 13.
GLORY, Eternal—the consideration of it alleviates the burden of the cross, II. 56. 3, etc.
GOD (see LOVE to)—all things preserved by his hand, IV. Part II. Ch. 20.
—— as infinite Omnipotence, II. Ch. 31; IV. Part I. Ch. 6. 14.
—— described by the prophet Joel, II. 9. 22–27.
—— his calling is earnest and decisive, III. Ch. 8.
—— his goodness or grace, II. 37. 5; IV. Part I. Ch. 6. 13.
GOD, his incomparable glory, II. 42. 16.
—— his infinity and eternity, IV. Part. II. Ch. 1.
—— his knowledge, IV. Part I. Ch. 6. 13.
—— his love a help in prayer, II. 38. 9.
—— his love appears in all his works, IV. Part II. Ch. 13.
—— his mercy, II. 8. 7.
—— his omnipresence, IV. Part I. Ch. 6. 15.
—— his omniscience, II. 34. Sect. 6; IV. Part II. 1. 3.
—— his seat in the soul, III. Ch. 6.
—— his veracity, II. 57. 5.
—— his wisdom, shown in the formation of man, IV. Part II. Ch. 10.
—— how illustrious, II. 42. 11.
—— how manifested, II. 37. 8.
—— invites all men to pray, II. 34. Sect. 8.
—— is love, II. Ch. 26.
—— manifestations of his wisdom, II. Ch. 33.
—— manifested as the Supreme Beauty, II. Ch. 30.
—— must be distinguished from his creatures and his gifts, III. Ch. 21; III. 22. 3.
—— not to be sought in any particular place, for he is everywhere, II. 34. Sect. 8.
—— operations of his righteousness, II. 32. 3, etc.
—— reasons, convincing us that he hears our prayers, II. 37. 12, etc.
—— the amiableness of his Being, II. 26. 10.
—— the eternal Wisdom, II. Ch. 33.
—— the folly of rejecting him, I. 36. 18.
—— the fountain of life and all good, II. 37. 4.
—— the highest righteousness and holiness, II. Ch. 32.
—— the light of the soul, III. Ch. 11.
—— the Omniscient, knows what we need before we ask him, II. 34. Sect. 6.
—— the only source of true happiness, I. 36. 9.
—— the Supreme Good, II. Ch. 28; IV. Part II. Ch. 2.
—— the temporal and spiritual benefits which he has bestowed, considered, II. Ch. 29.
—— what he is, I. 1. 6; I. 37. 2.
GODLINESS—two motives recommending the study of it, I. 40. 1.
GODLY Sorrow (see SORROW for Sin), I. 8. 7; I. 11. 4; I. 20. 20.
GRACE—indispensable, I. 41. 28; II. 9. 11.
—— its influence and blessed results, I. 34. 7, etc.

Gregory, St.—quoted, III. 15. 2.
Growing in grace, I. 23. 4; I. 37. 19.

H.

Hardness of heart, I. 38. 3, etc.
Hatred—of self, I. 14. 1; I. 14. 14.
—— of vices, but not of men, I. 40. XII.
Heart, Paternal, of God, II. 8. 5.
Heart, Purity of—watching over it, I. 40. II.
Heart, Blindness of—its results, I. 41. 19.
Heart—its state, II. 4. 3; II. 7. 5.
—— must be changed, II. 9. 13.
—— regarded by God, II. 4. 4.
Hell, Eternal pains of, I. 7. 5; II. 8. 13.
Heaven, the work of the Second Day, IV. Part I. Ch. 2.
Holy Spirit—how he is driven away by worldly pleasures, III. Ch. 18.
—— how he operates in our souls, III. Ch. 16.
—— office of the, II. 35. 4.
—— our help in prayer, II. 38. 3.
—— signs of his presence in us, III. Ch. 17.
—— truly God, II. 37. 21.
Hope—Christ its object, II. 12. 2; II. 50. 8.
—— how tested in seasons of affliction, II. Ch. 50.
—— what it is, II. 50. 1.
Honor, Worldly—how to be received, II. 22. 7, 8.
Human nature—one argument of its dignity, IV. Part I. Ch. 6. 19.
Humility (see Pride)—a means of union with God, III. 5. 1.
—— exemplified by Jesus, II. 21. 3.
—— explained; its happy influence, etc., I. 19. 1–16.
—— how we are taught to practise it, II. 21. 2.
—— it must be laid as a foundation in the heart, III. Ch. 20.
—— its necessity, III. 15. 4, 5.
—— its power, II. Ch. 21.
—— six steps or degrees of it, III. 5. 2.
—— what constitutes it, III. 8. 2.
—— without it, all prayer is in vain, II. 21. 4.
Hypocrisy, I. 12. 11.

I.

Idolatry, II. 22. 3–6.
Ignatius, II. 45. 8.
Image of God in man—how man lost it, I. 1. 8; I. 41. 11.
Image of God,—originally shone forth in man's soul, I. 41. 7.
—— the different modes in which it appears in man, I. 1. 4.
—— what it is, I. 1. 1; I. 41. 10.
—— what it was intended to teach, I. 1. 5, 9.
—— why it was impressed on man, I. 1. 2.
Image of Satan, I. 41. 23.
Imputation (see Merit)—of the merit of Christ, I. 8. 17.
—— of the righteousness of Christ, I. 4. 7.
Inability of man, I. 34. 2, 7; II. 6. 4, 8.
Incarnation of Christ (see Christ, etc.), I. 11. 9; I. 31. 9; I. 34. 4; I. 37. 11; II. 25. 7; II. 26. 2; II. 34. 2; IV. Part II. Ch. 5. 2.
Indwelling of Christ in man, I. 5. 9.
Inheritance from Adam, I. 3. 5.
Injuries—viewed as trials of the heart, I. 40. IX.
Interim, Augsburg, Introd. §§ 12, 15.

J.

Jacques, Introd. §§ 32, 37, 38.
Joy—divine and worldly, incompatible with one another, I. 20. 11.
—— Divine, the fruit of divine love, IV. Part II. Ch. 36.
—— Heavenly, how to be accepted, I. 40. VI.
—— in God, originally perfect, I. 41. 8.
—— of eternal life, II. 8. 14.
Judgment, Last, II. 8. 12.
Julian the Apostate, I. 38. 2.
Justification, I. 5. 1.
—— derived from God alone, II. 6. 8.

K.

Knowledge of Christ, etc.—its excellence, I. 40. XV.
—— what is comprehended in it, I. 41. 1.
—— wherein it consists, I. 39. 5.
Knowledge of God—his knowledge, IV. Part I. Ch. 6. 12.
—— wherein it consists, I. 11. 18; I. 21. 6, etc.
Knowledge—of grace, I. 21. 5, 16, 17.
—— of sin, I. 21. 11.
—— of the Scriptures—vain, without a holy life, I. 35. 1, etc.

L.

Laurentius Valla—a saying of his, II. 5. 4.
Law, Inward—its lessons, I. 7. 1–3.

Lazarus, the friend of Christ, II. 13. 4.
Learning, Human—is distinct from godliness, I. 36. 14.
Leyser, P., Introd. § 2.
Life, Holy—proceeds from a renewed heart, I. 22. 2.
—— rules for leading it, I. 40. 1, etc.
Life of Christ (see Example), I. 10. 2; I. 11. 16; I. 14. 8, etc.; I. 37. 8.
Life of the Christian—a continual renewing of the image of God, I. 41. 2.
Life, Spiritual, I. 11. 12.
—— abolished in the carnal man, 1. 41. 18.
—— different degrees of, Pref. to Book I. 1.
Life, Unholy, I. 10. 1, 3.
—— its effects, I. 38. 1, etc.; I. 39. 6.
Light—Natural, in the understanding, I. 41. 17, 26; III. Ch. 10.
—— of grace, III. Ch. 10.
—— of nature, I. 7. 3.
—— of the sun and moon; its benefits, IV. Part I. Ch. 4. 19.
—— the work of the First Day, IV. Part I. Ch. 1.
Living in Christ, I. 6. 2–5; I. 36. 1, etc.
Lord's Prayer—its true use, III. Ch. 19.
Lord's Supper—therein Christ's true body and blood are received, III. 1. 4.
Love (see Self-love)—a bond of union, IV. Part II. Ch. 28.
—— evils proceeding from the want of it, I. 31. 5; I. 35. 3.
—— four particulars concerning it, I. 24. 1.
—— four properties of it, II. 24. 17.
—— how it is to be guided, II. 24. 11.
—— in it are contained all the duties of a Christian, I. 35. 1.
—— its distinguishing feature, I. 35. 2.
—— its fruits, I. 30. 1–14; I. 32. 6; II. 24. 12.
—— its nature, properties, and fruits, IV. Part II. Ch. 27.
—— its necessity, I. 30. 1; I. 32. 7; I. 35. 7–9.
—— its noble character, II. Ch. 24.
—— its pleasantness, I. 24. 8; I. 29. 11, 12.
—— misguided, II. 24. 10.
—— mistakes made in reference to it, II. 24. 2, etc.
—— never faints, I. 24. 9.
—— the sure test of a Christian, I. 24. 7.
Love, Our—is not a hard work, I. 24. 6.
—— is the end of the Commandment, I. 24. 5; I. 26. 4.
—— reasons why it is due to God alone, I. 18. 12; II. Ch. 24; II. 29. 13; IV. Part II. Ch. 30.
Love,—what alone is worthy of it, IV. Part II. Ch. 29.
Love of Christ—the blessedness which it confers, II. Ch. 27.
Love to Christ, I. 14. 12.
—— signs of its existence, II. Ch. 25.
Love to God, I. 24. 2; I. 29. 3.
—— a remedy against profane love, I. 28. 5; III. 13. 4.
—— how it enters into the soul, III. Ch. 13.
—— is due to him, I. 28. 1, 4.
—— its influence, I. 24. 16; I. 28. 2; I. 28. 7; II. 24. 12, etc.
—— its nature, I. 28. 8; IV. Part II. Ch. 35.
—— no excuse for the want of it, IV. Part II. Ch. 17.
—— obtained by prayer, I. 24. 17.
—— out of a pure heart, I. 24. 14.
—— Pure, teaches how to pray, II. 24. 16.
—— the source of all that is good, IV. Part II. Ch. 32.
—— unchanged, I. 24. 23.
Love of God to man, I. 25. 1–6.
—— how manifested. II. Ch. 26.
Love, False, I. 28. 3; I. 35. 6; II. 24. 4, etc.
Love to our enemies—why they should be loved, I. 27. 1–9
Love to our neighbor, I. 24. 3; I. 24. 18–21; I. 29. 3–10.
—— a duty, I. 25. 2; IV. Part II. Ch. 24.
—— its source, I. 26. 5; I. 28. 10.
—— motives to practise it, I. 26. 6–16.
—— proceeds from the love which we owe to God, IV. Part II. Ch. 22.
Lovers of the world—how they are deceived, II. 26. 11.
—— their conduct, I. 36. 11.
—— their punishment, I. 18. 10, 11.
—— their spiritual state, I. 17. 9; I. 36. 2.
Lusts of the flesh—how to be subdued, II. Ch. 18.
Luther—his successful opposition to the papacy and other sects, I. 39. 2.

M.

Majoristic Controversy, Introd. §§ 15, 19.
Man—general rule on the subject, IV. Part II. Ch. 16.
—— his liberty of choice, I. 17. 2.
—— his natural state, II. 5. 4.
—— how much he owes to God, IV. Part II. Ch. 6; Ch. 8; Ch. 9; Ch. 11; Ch. 12.

Man, like a shadow, is nothing, II. 10. 13, 14.
—— only a pilgrim on earth, I. 13. 16.
—— the image of God, I. 1. 6; IV. Part II. Ch. 23.
—— what, and why made, IV. Part II. Ch. 3.
—— why he should love God, IV. Part II. Ch. 14.
—— why made in the image of God, IV. Part II. Ch. 4.
Man, The Inward—Outward, I. 16. 1.
Man, The Natural, II. 5. 5.
Man, The Old—New, I. 15. 1, etc.; I. 16. 11; II. 7. 1.
Marks of love to Christ, II. Ch. 25.
Martyrs—false, I. 35. 7.
—— spiritual, II. 53. 20.
—— their fidelity, II. 45. 7.
Meekness, II. 47. 2.
Mephibosheth, II. 10. 6.
Merit of Christ (see Imputation), I. 14. 7; I. 31. 8; I. 34. 1; II. 2. 8.
—— an infinite satisfaction, II. 2. 11, 12.
Micah, the prophet—pointing out the fountain of consolation, II. 49. 4.
Muhlenberg, Introd. §§ 34. 41.
Music—its origin, IV. Part II. Ch. 7. 3.
Music, Divine—several kinds, in the Old Testament, II. 41. 10.
Muenzer, Thomas, Introd. § 15. e

N.

Name of God—doing all things in it, I. 18. 5.
Narrow way in Christ—chosen by the Christian, II. 34. Sect. 4.
Neighbors (see Love)—judging them, III. Ch. 11.
New Birth (see Birth; Regeneration)—how effected, I. 3. 1.
—— it alone renders our works acceptable to God, I. 31. 10.
—— its fruits, I. 11. 17.
—— its necessity, I. 3. 8; I. 41. 16.
—— what it is, I. 5. 2, 4.

O.

Oath, Divine—a source of consolation, II. 2. 2–5.
Obedience of Christ, II. 2. 13.
Offerings brought to God, I. 40. VII.
Oil, IV. Part I. Ch. 3. 43, 44.
Old Man, The (see Man)—encouragement derived from the strife with, I. 16. 11.
Omnipresence, Omnipotence, etc.; see God.
Original Sin (see Corruption), I. 2. 8; I. 41. 13, etc.; I. 42. 2.
—— its nature set forth in Book I.; Pref. to Book II. 2.
Osiandrian Controversy, Introd. § 15.

P.

Palatinate, The, Introd. § 17.
Paracelsus, Introd. § 28.
Patience, Christian—consolations, II. 47, 17.
—— examples of, II. 47. 16.
—— motives to, II. Ch. 46.
—— produced by divine consolations, II. Ch. 45.
—— reasons for exercising it, II. Ch. 44.
—— Scriptural sentences respecting it, II. 47. 4–15.
—— sustained by the truth and promises of God, II. Ch. 49.
—— what it is, II. 44. 1; II. 45. 1; II. 47. 2, 3; III. Ch. 14.
Perfection, Absolute—not attainable, I. 11. 11; II. 51. 3.
—— not found in this world, II. 4. 2.
Perfection of the Christian life—wherein it consists, Pref. to Book III. 7.
Pericles, I. 27. 5.
Peter and Paul—their religious character, I. 17. 12.
Phocion, I. 27. 5.
Pilgrimage, Our—its nature, I. 17. 10.
Plato, II. 30. 4.
Poor and contrite, The—acceptable to God, I. 19. 11–16.
Poverty of spirit, III. 5. 1.
Prætorius, Introd. § 1.
Praise to God—benefits and efficacy of, II. Ch. 41.
—— offered by holy men, II. 42. 13.
—— reasons for offering it daily, II. Ch. 42.
—— to offer it, man's greatest privilege, II. 43. 4.
—— to offer it, the most honorable employment of men, II. Ch. 43.
—— when offered, a source of consolation, II. 48. 14.
Pray, To—sinful, whether in dependence on our own merit, or to forbear on account of our unworthiness, II. 34. Sect. 9.
Prayer—a consolation against the fear of death, II. 57. 12.
—— all men invited to it, by God, II. 34. Sect. 7.

Prayer—a means of obtaining consolation in affliction, II. 48. 13.
—— a protection against calumny, II. 17. 6.
—— benefits of continual, II. 34. Sect. 3.
—— certainty that it will be heard, II. 49. 7.
—— conversation of a believing soul with God, in, II. Ch. 39.
—— efficacy of the prayer of faith, II. 41. 6.
—— encouragements to, II. 20. 11, etc.
—— encouragements to, and lessons on, II. 34. Sect. 12.
—— evils which follow the neglect of, II. 34. Sect. 2.
—— in Psalm 109: 1, etc., explained, II. 16. 1, etc.
—— its necessity, I. 42. 4 (e); II. 5. 4; II. Ch. 20.
—— internal, II. 20. 4; III. Ch. 19.
—— its benefits, power, and ground, II. Ch. 36.
—— its numerous qualities, offices, etc., II. 36. 16.
—— mental, II. 20. 7.
—— oral, II. 20. 3.
—— pattern of. furnished by Christ, II. 20. 10.
—— reasons why God certainly hears it, II. Ch. 37.
—— seven helps for our infirmities in, II. Ch. 38.
—— strengthens faith, II. 51. 16.
—— secret, II. 36. 9.
—— supernatural, II. 20. 4.
—— taught by love to God, II. 24. 16.
—— temptations, when we pray, II. 20. 16, 17.
—— the sign of a true Christian, II. Ch. 35.
—— the worshipper not restricted to any certain times of, II. 34. Sect. 11.
—— vain, without humility, II. 21. 4.
—— when acceptable to God, II. 20. 9.
—— when not heard, II. 37. 23, etc.
—— wherein it consists, II. 20. 1.
—— why it is enjoined, II. 20. 8.
—— why we should commune with God in prayer, II. 34. Sect. 5.
Preface (Author's) to Book I. p. xxxix.
—— Book II. p. 157.
—— Book III. p. 375.
—— Book IV. p. 423.
Pride (see Humility), I. 31. 1, etc.; I. 39. 8; III. 20. 2.
—— influence of, II. 22. 2, etc.
—— its properties, III. 20. 1–4.
Pride—remedy against spiritual, II. 7. 7.
—— spiritual, I. 42. 4.
Priesthood of Christ, II. 2. 15.
Prodigal Son, Parable of, II. 8. 2, etc.; II. 10. 7.
Promises, Divine—the chief source of the Christian's consolation, II. 2. 1; II. 45. 6.
Providence—a source of comfort, II. 45. 2; IV. Part I. Ch. 6. 16.
—— of God; three things wherein it consists, IV. Part I. Ch. 6. 12. etc.
Psalms—six, called Golden Songs, II, 43. 1.
—— suited to various circumstances, II. 41. 12.
—— the Penitential, I. 4. 9, note.
Punishments, Future—eternity of, I. 7. 5.
Punishments, Temporal, II. 8. 9; II. 8. 13.

R.

Rationalists, Introd. § 40.
Reconciliation to our neighbor, I. 29. 1, 2.
—— enforced by three arguments, II. 4. 4. a. b. c.
—— the terms of, I. 29. 14.
Refuge, Cities of, I. 21. 15, 16.
Regeneration (see New Birth)—by divine goodness, II. 9. 3.
—— how effected, I. 3. 4.
—— in what it consists, I. 3. 7; II. 9. 1, etc.
—— its necessity, I. 41. 27.
—— men invited to, II. 9. 4.
—— produced by divine threatenings, II. 9. 2.
—— whence it proceeds, I. 3. 11, 12.
Remission of Sins—follows repentance, I. 8. 12, 16.
—— is not granted without repentance, I. 34. 12.
Renewal in Christ, I. 3. 5.
—— continued, I. 22. 4, etc.
Repentance (see Conversion)—a quality of it, I. 29. 16.
—— daily, I. 20. 10
—— founded on humility, III. 20. 3.
—— four properties of, II. 10. 1, etc.
—— illustrations of, I. 21. 12; II. 8. 1, etc.
—— its fruits, I. 42. 2; II. 9. 28.
—— its necessity, I. 8. 1–15; I. 37. 10; I. 37. 22, 23.
—— manner of, II. 9. 14.
—— motives to, II. 9. 22, etc.
—— the source of the Christian's life, Pref. to Book I. 1.

REPENTANCE—what it is, I. 4. 1–11; I. 8. 2; I. 21. 10; II. 3. 1, etc.
—— when it is unfeigned, II. 10. 14.
—— without reconciliation and restitution, not acceptable to God, I. 29. 19.
RESURRECTION of Christ (see CHRIST), II. 25. 10; II. 57. 4.
—— its fruit, II. 57. 11.
RESURRECTION of our bodies—a ground of comfort, II. 57. 3.
REVELATION—punishment of those who reject it, I. 7. 7, 8.
RIGHTEOUSNESS—by faith, II. 3. 8.
—— whence it proceeds, I. 5. 8; II. 3. 4.
RIGHTEOUSNESS of Christ—made our own, II. 3. 6.
RIGHTEOUSNESS, Our—its foundation, I. 3. 9.
—— whence it proceeds, II. 3. 1, etc.

S.

SAINTS—example given by them, II. 17. 4, 5; II. 17. 10; II. 44. 8; II. 52. 15; II. 54. 8.
—— their constant practice, I. 20. 18.
—— their example, a help in prayer, II. 38. 5–8.
—— their example, a source of comfort, II. 45. 8.
—— their temptations, II. 52. 2, etc.
SATAN—his character, I. 41. 22.
—— his fall, I. 31. 7; II. 17. 9.
—— his fiery darts, II. 52. 6.
—— his image in man, I. 2. 3.
—— his want of power, II. 53. 2, 3.
SCHWENKFELDT, INTROD. §§ 14, 24.
SCRIPTURES (see WORD)—their purpose, I. 6. 8, 9.
SEA, The—lessons taught by it, Ch. 5. 15.
SEEKING after God—two ways, III. 4. 1.
SELF-DENIAL, I, 4. 3; I. 14. 6; I. 15. 4, etc.; II. 7. 2; II. 10. 2; III. 23. 4.
SELF-LOVE, I. 31. 1, etc.; IV. Part II. Ch. 33.
—— its actual result, IV. Part II. Ch. 31.
—— its dangers, I. 14. 2, etc.; I. 31. 3; I. 31. 7; I. 14. 10.
—— its evil fruits, IV. Part II. Ch. 37; Ch. 38; Ch. 40.
—— its remedy, I. 31. 8.
—— its source, I. 31. 6.
—— the source of all evil, IV. Part II. 32. 2, 3.
SELF—worship of, II. 23.
SERVETUS, INTROD. §§ 15, 16.
SIN (see ORIGINAL SIN; REMISSION)—never comes alone, I. 37. 18.
SLANDER, see CALUMNY.
SLOTH—to be shaken off, II. 5. 7.
SMALCALD Articles, INTROD. § 25.
SOLOMON'S throne, III. 5. 2.
SORROW for Sin (see GODLY sorrow)—its happy influence, I. 20. 7.
SORROW—worldly, and. godly, I. 40. IV.
SOUL—its dignity, III. 7. 1; IV. Part I. 6. 18–24.
—— its image shining forth originally in the body, I. 41. 7.
—— its original holy nature, I. 41. 5.
—— the habitation of the Holy Ghost, II. 35. 3.
—— the things that instruct and comfort it, IV. Part II. Ch. 7.
SPIRIT and flesh (see HOLY SPIRIT)—conflict between them, I. 16. 2, etc.
STARS, The, IV. Part I. Ch. 4.
STRASBURG, INTROD. § 2.
SUBSTANCE of the Christian religion—is faith and love, I. 30. 1.
SUPPER, The Lord's—wherein Christ gives us his body and blood, II. 10. 6; III. 1. 4.
SYMBOL, what—INTROD. § 41, Note.
SYMBOLICAL Books, INTROD. §§ 22, 24, 25, 40, 41, 42; PREF. to Book I. 8; Conclusion of Book II.
SYNERGISTIC Controversy, INTROD. §§ 15, 19.

T.

TALENTS—not they, but faith and love required, I. 32. 1, etc.
—— why bestowed, I. 32. 4.
TAULER,—PREF. to Book I. 8; INTROD. § 29.
—— quotations from, II. 53. 20; III. 1. 3.
—— subject of his Sermons, I. 37. 16.
TEMPORAL things—design of their creation, I. 17. 1.
—— loss of, I. 20. 21, 22.
—— preference of, offensive to God, I. 18. 1, etc.
TEMPTATIONS, Spiritual—comforting instructions for those who labor under them, II. Ch. 52; II. Ch. 53; II. Ch. 54.
—— God refreshes the weak in, III. 23. 3.
—— not tokens of God's anger, II. 53. 13.
—— origin of, II. 52. 4–7.
—— reasons why they are sent, II. 52. 7, etc.; II. 53. 4, etc.

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Testimony of the Spirit, II. 2. 9.
Theology—what it is, Pref. to Book I. 2.
Thirst—ours, and Christ's, I. 36. 24.
Thirty Years' War, Introd. § 22.
Thomas á Kempis, Pref. to Book. 1. 8; Introd. § 29.
Titus, the Roman emperor, I. 27. 5.
Trinity, Holy—benefits conferred by, II. 29. 10.
—— dwelling in the hearts of believers, III. 1. 1.
Treasure, Internal—means of attaining it, III. Ch. 1.
—— of the believer, III. Ch. 1.
—— what it is, and on what it depends, III. Ch. 3.

U.

Unbelief—its fruits, I. 37. 4.
Union with Christ—of the highest necessity, II. 6. 3.
Union with God, II. 6. 1.
—— a property of true repentance, II. 10. 15
—— its necessity, II. 28. 4.

V.

Vanity and emptiness of man, II. 23. 1.
Vengeance of God—set forth by Moses, II. 32. 7, 8.
Vice—abounding among Christians, I. 7. 6.
Vincent, St., II. 45. 8.
Virtue—false love of, II. 24. 9.

W.

Warfare, Spiritual—an encouraging evidence, I. 16. 11.
—— even in the godly, I. 16. 7.
Waters—separated from the land, the work of the Third Day, IV. Part I. Ch. 3.
—— they, and their productions, IV. Part I. Ch. 5.
Weigel, Introd. § 28.
Wildenhahn, Introd. §§ 10, 26, 30.
Will of man—originally conformed to the will of God, I. 41. 6.
—— what it now is, II. 6. 7.
Wine, IV. Part I. Ch. 3. 40–42.
Wisdom—how to be acquired, II. 5. 1.
Woman of Canaan, The, III. 5. 1.
Word of God (see Scriptures)—its graciousness and efficacy, I. 36. 20, 21.
—— not a dead letter, I. 6. 2.
—— reading, etc., it, a protection against calumny, II. 17. 7.
—— who reject it, I. 38. 8.
Word and Sacraments—means of grace, II. 9. 7.
—— strengthen faith, II. 51. 16.
—— their design, I. 38. 1.
Works—how judged, I. 33. 1; II. 5. 6.
—— how they may be rendered acceptable to God, III. Ch. 22.
—— their source must be faith, I. 33. 4; II. 22. 1.
—— they cannot justify, I. 5. 6.
—— worth, their, how to be judged, II. 4. 5.
Works, Good—God alone the Author, I. 21. 21.
World—its vanity, II. 57. 17, etc.
—— necessity of withdrawing from it, I. 23. 2.
—— relinquishing it, I. 20. 25.
Worldly pleasures—drive away the Holy Spirit, III. Ch. 18.
Worldly society, I. 23. 5, etc.
Worship, True—of God, I. 21. 3, etc.
—— required, on our own account, I. 21. 21, 22.
—— seated in the heart, I. 21. 19; I. 26. 3.
—— three things belonging to it, I. 21. 5.
—— wherein it consists, I. 26. 2.

Y.

Yoke of Christ, I. 4. 6; I. 11. 13.

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